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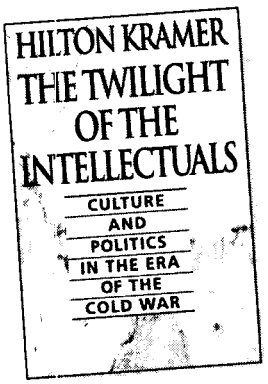

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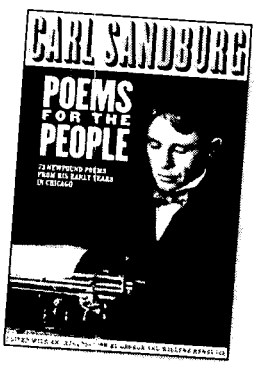

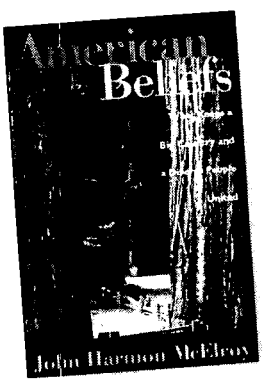

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Editor's Page

I THINK THAT I am in favor of the fourth way, or maybe the fifth; anyway, I am sure there is a "way" coming that will be better than all the others. The advantage of four and five is that they will force politicians and political intellectuals to abandon the triadic mode, in which they identify two equally unattractive polar opposites and then plant themselves firmly in the center. Maybe we need to pick and choose across the whole spectrum; maybe we need more than one spectrum. For the moment, however, large numbers of people on the left, in many different countries, want to be third, and we need to understand exactly what that means: hence the special section in this issue. Sometimes it doesn't mean much; thirdness is a merchandising slogan, useful precisely because no one quite knows what is being sold. At the same time, truth to tell, we have friends on the third way, and we hope they are after something. Our authors give some indication of what they should be after: greater equality (or, at least, no further growth of inequality), some limits on the global market, protection for workers' rights, defense of existing welfare services. That would make a modest third way. And then the fourth. . . . ■ Anyone who is interested in the wrongdoing of political leaders should read Marguerite Feitlowitz's article on the long struggle to bring the former military rulers of Argentina and Chile to justice. Perhaps the greatest virtue of the article is that it puts this past year of American politics into perspective. Not all political prosecutions are *merely* political, narrowly partisan; there really are criminals out there, and it is important to think carefully about how one should go after them. Sometimes, perhaps, it is best, all things considered, not to go after them; sometimes amnesty and amnesia may be the only way to peace and democratic stability. There are hard and deep questions here, with which the left especially has to wrestle, in part because it has provided, at least in the Latin American cases, most of the victims; in part because it provides, in almost all the human-rights cases, most of the prosecutors or the would-be prosecutors. ■ I am in Israel for the first half of 1999, on leave from my academic job (but not from *Dissent*), and I have already been invited to three conferences on multiculturalism. The difference politics that Linda Gordon both sympathizes with and criticizes is flourishing here in ways that are very dangerous for any kind of left politics: they make the American debates look relatively easy. The range of difference in countries like this one is so wide that it is likely to require political and constitutional arrangements more radical than anything proposed for the United States. Still, the position that Gordon has worked her way to over some twenty years looks wonderfully attractive from Jerusalem. The recognition of value in difference is something that the left has to come to grips with; but it can't get stuck there. We also have to defend the value of a shared citizenship and a common life.

M.W.

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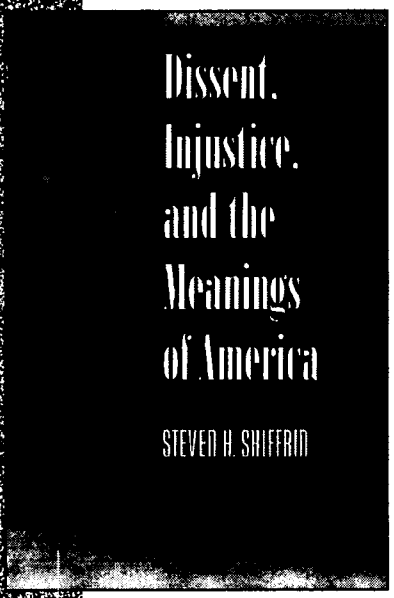

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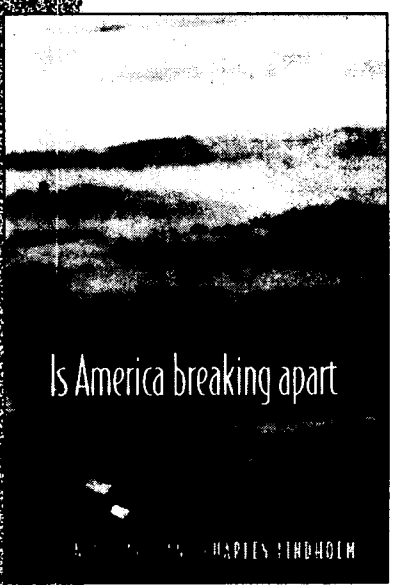

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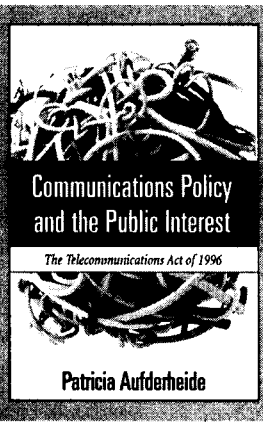

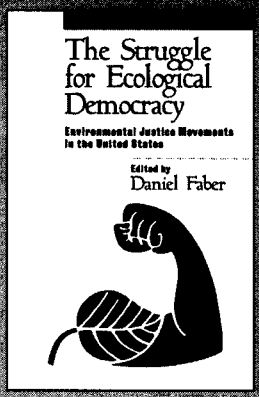

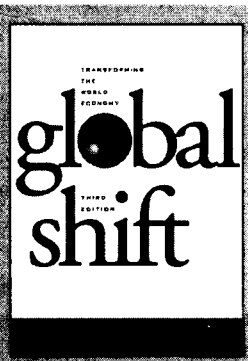

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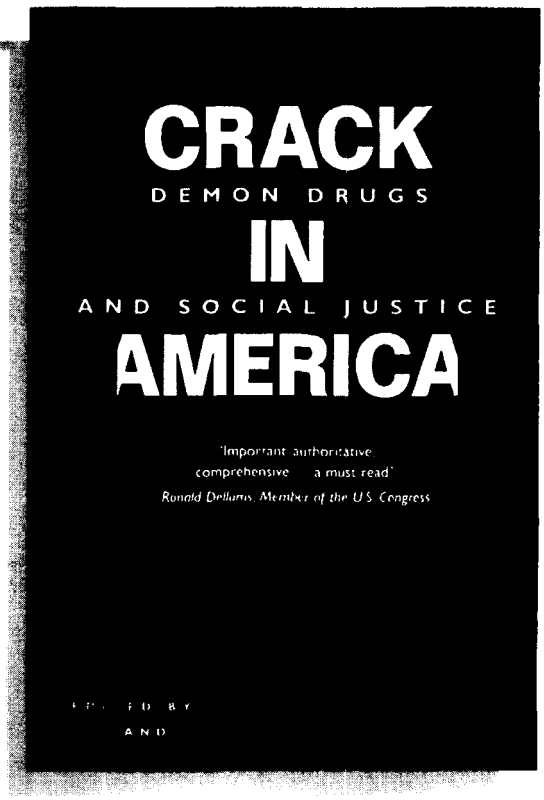

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With this issue Dissent *inaugurates a new series entitled "Brave New Globe." Over the next two years a diverse group of writers will analyze, debate, and worry aloud about the world economy. The series begins here with Alice Amsden and Takashi Hikino making an argument about how the left should think about globalization. Ensuing issues will features James K. Galbraith, economist at the LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas, Austin; Mark Levinson, chief economist for the Union of Needlecraft, Industrial & Textile Employees; and Susan George, Paris-based political and economic critic. After this first set of articles, these authors will do a second round in 2000-2001.* -EDS.

The Left and Globalization

Alice H. Amsden and Takashi Hikino

GLOBALISM has become the buzzword of American political elites. It symbolizes wildly free markets in every corner of the world and in every aspect of economic life—trade, foreign investment, finance, and even labor. Among both Democrats and Republicans, the battle cry is the same: liberalize, privatize, and deregulate. Uninhibited flows of resources across borders will make everyone rich.

American progressives have generally stood in opposition to this Brave New World. Wisely, they have demanded capital controls on "hot money" flowing into and out of emerging economies in order to reduce financial chaos. Just as wisely, they have urged a return to the managed-trade policies characteristic of the postwar Bretton Woods arrangements. Ultra-free markets work no better than rigid central planning.

But many progressives have also gone much further. They have opposed virtually all aspects of globalism, from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to the trade-driven developmental strategies practiced by Japan and its East Asian neighbors. Moreover, they justify their positions as being in the interests of both American and foreign workers, just as free marketeers claim to have God on their side.

This line-up is ironic. American socialists historically were internationalist while conservatives were isolationist. The Establishment kept to the Monroe Doctrine (political and economic hegemony in Latin America, detachment elsewhere) while socialists joined a movement that championed international working-class solidarity. The conviction was that workers in one country had less in common with their middle-class compatriots than with workers in other nations. To improve low pay and poor working conditions throughout the world, socialists and social democrats were in the vanguard of devising economic development policies, including the export of capital to the third world.

Now it's the other way 'round, at least in the United States. Ruling-class ideology favors a blurring of international borders and global growth in order to employ cheap, productive foreign labor and to acquire cheap, up-and-coming foreign firms, while left-wing internationalism is largely defensive of American workers' past glories. For many progressives,

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environmental and consumerist concerns have even made economic development a dirty word. The unprecedented growth in output and real wages experienced first in Japan and then in other Asian emerging economies, where per capita incomes doubled in a decade, has been despised for its lack of democracy, endemic corruption, and vulnerability to financial ups and downs.

In theory, progressives' commitment to working class solidarity remains stronger than ever. In practice, such solidarity has become wishful thinking at best and nationalistic at worst.

Why this extraordinary policy shift between right and left? A simple answer is that the world has changed. The U.S. economy is now Number One internationally, and open world markets are in the interests of corporate America but not American workers. A more complex answer is that the world was never quite what socialists imagined it to be.

The ideology of international working-class solidarity was always extremely vague and unspecified in economic terms, comparable to the fuzziness of "working-class consciousness." When international trade was composed mainly of primary products, and world competition only extended to workers whose wages differed by a ratio of, at most, two to one, it was easy to conceive of egalitarian models of economic integration. But now international trade is dominated by flows of capital goods and technology. These dramatically raise the productivity of workers in the most underdeveloped countries. The global wage gap, however, has widened to the order of twenty to one. Under these conditions the presumption of international working class solidarity has became implausible, to say the least.

THIS PRESUMPTION, however, remains an article of faith in the one international policy today that bears a socialist imprimatur and that socialists have championed as quintessentially their own. It is the policy of tying labor standards and human rights to third world exports of manufactured goods. Only if these standards meet advanced country specifications, the argument runs, should imports from these countries be allowed into the United States at low duties. Moreover, progressives see this as a win-win situation: if exports are "tied," American workers are no longer threatened by 'unfair' foreign competition while impoverished workers overseas will get higher wages, better working conditions, and more human rights.

Intellectuals and dissidents in the affected countries, from left to right, have given such demands their support. But by any stretch of the imagination, human rights conditionality has not created any obvious groundswell of support among foreign workers. This may have less to do with their poor education than with their good sense.

The reality is that not all factories overseas are satanic mills (some are far better than American workplaces). Cheap, labor-intensive exports to North Atlantic markets have created jobs for millions of unemployed, landless third world workers. In some countries, these exports have even provided a stepping stone to serious industrial transformation and economic development. If labor standards raise wage costs prematurely, before alternative economic activities can be created, the end result may protect American workers but at great economic hardship to the poor countries allegedly being helped. Better working conditions without jobs is a Pyrrhic victory.

This in no way negates the need for progressives to fight against child labor and in favor of basic human rights—everyone deserves to live with due process and without fear of torture. But don't make human rights conditional on access to American markets. The United States could end the most egregious human rights abuses in a matter of days if it embargoed arms and military assistance to foreign dictators, or even if it forbade hot-money American investors to truck in such countries. Global demands for labor standards that raise foreign labor costs are just protectionism in disguise.

The hostility of progressives to NAFTA on the grounds that it was bad for both American and Mexican workers was also self-serving. After all, the free trade agreement was hardly free. It gave tariff protection to the United States and Mexico from every other country in the world except each other, and

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Mexican workers had nothing to lose economically and everything to gain from U.S. and Canadian long-term investment. It's been five years since NAFTA came into effect, and employment generation in Mexico by foreign investment is the most dynamic component of Mexican employment. The jobs that have been created have not substituted for higher paid Mexican jobs but for no jobs at all. Ironically, the effect of NAFTA on American workers has been peanuts, since the portion of American outward investment going to Mexico remains infinitesimally small. If Mexico gets its act together, it could provide a market of 120 million people for American products—a win-win situation. So what's so terrible about NAFTA?

"International working class solidarity" has turned out to be a shaky edifice on which to build progressive globalism. Thus, socialist policy has to be thoroughly rethought or it will continue to slide into isolationism.

Certainly by comparison with socialist movements in other countries, American leftists have recently been isolationist, opposing virtually every aspect of the global economy. Japanese socialists tend to support regionalism to reduce the domestic power of the Japanese state. European socialist parties have contributed to the creation of the European Union. Why the withdrawal symptoms of the American left?

The huge divisions in income distribution within the United States, even below the managerial level, are partly to blame. There is a bigger gulf between high- and low-paid workers in the United States, say the bottom 10 percent to the median 50 percent, than almost anywhere else in the industrialized world. Socialists have tended historically to be oriented toward helping the lower end of the scale. A large pool of unskilled labor was once the norm. The situation has changed, however, and now most American workers are white collar and well educated. But the typical worker is still conceived of as being blue collar and unskilled. Therefore, the slightest threat of low-wage competition from abroad brings forth a knee-jerk reaction of sealing the borders. Rethinking foreign economic policy, therefore, will require rethinking domestic economic policy.

Let's acknowledge that there is a dual labor market in the United States. The lowest paid U.S. workers have interests that conflict with low-paid foreign workers. White-collar workers have interests that increasingly dovetail with their cohorts abroad, all of whom work long hours in nonunionized software factories, information-processing plants, retail stores, banks, and other genteel sweatshops. Low-wage American workers need to have special policies to protect them when their jobs pass to poorer workers overseas. The great majority of white-collar workers, on the other hand, need to be attracted to new socialist policies that address their true needs in a world of increasingly global technology flows. ●

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For the past year the United States was immersed in the impeachment drama that finally ended in January. We have asked some thoughtful authors, most of them Dissent *regulars, to reflect on key issues raised by this unpleasant moment in the country's history. -EDS.*

Democratic Questions

Joanne Barkan

THE END of Bill Clinton's impeachment trial was a signal to the nation's varsity pundits—time to begin overall evaluations of *l'affaire* Monica. The award for "most lugubrious wrap-up" goes to David Gergen. Speaking on a panel aired by C-SPAN, Gergen explained oh-so-gravely that the American people remain "deeply troubled" by Bill Clinton's lying; they crave "closure," but the system failed to provide it. For Gergen, Watergate gets a higher rating for closure: Richard Nixon resigned, Gerald Ford pardoned him, people felt the system worked.

Gergen misses the mark on both the 1974 pardon (but let's leave Watergate aside) and this year's ordeal. We got grade-A closure as soon as William Rehnquist, presiding over the Senate trial, proclaimed the not-guilty verdict and banged the gavel. In fact, the one benefit of the protracted trial was a common sense of closure when it finally ended. Are the American people—that mythic whole—deeply troubled? No, two-thirds of them applauded the verdict; they continue to separate Clinton's lying about a sexual liaison from his responsibilities as president. And the other one-third of Americans? Angry frustration, not profound angst, probably describes their feelings. Their representatives fought hard to get rid of Clinton and lost.

Instead of Gergenesque mourning, a historically oriented moment of celebration seemed appropriate after the trial. Americans had been able to go about the necessary business of everyday life during a long and serious political crisis. We worked, sent children to school, bought food, and slept with adequate security. It doesn't hurt to recall now and then that "the orderly vote" isn't the species' primary mode of conflict resolution. Only a foolish cynic would claim that life went on because Americans were ignorant of or indifferent to impeachment. On the contrary, most Americans knew all the arguments as well as the pundits did and took positions early on. Business as usual during a political conflict is a hallmark and a boon of democracy.

I don't minimize the threat to Constitution and political institutions posed by Ken Starr and the Republicans in Congress. Pie-eyed with their own moralizing, junked-out on personal antipathy toward Clinton, they trampled legal protections, twisted precedents, and would have gladly demolished the separation of powers. We counted all along on the Senate's sixty-seven-vote threshold to stop them. A handful of votes seems like flimsy armor for democratic institutions. Yet everything that protects a democracy—freedom of the press, independent judiciary, reasonable public opinion, engaged citizenry—is fragile. They all require endless cultivation.

THE YEAR of the Ex-intern will have concrete consequences, some good, some bad. First, on the positive side, the Independent Counsel Statute, which loosed Ken Starr on the nation, comes up for renewal in late June. Congress will either modify the law by limiting the powers of the independent counsel or let the statute die. Most leftists cheered special prosecutors when they went after the Reagan administration during the Iran-Contra affair. Now everyone understands the peril of an open-ended mandate to investigate.

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Second (and contrary to early predictions), events have probably raised the standard—numerically, if not substantively—for launching impeachment proceedings. Congress won't throw itself into such an effort again unless would-be impeachers can guarantee closer to sixty-seven votes in the Senate.

Third, Democrats in Congress held Clinton's fate in their hands for many months. During that time, he couldn't capitulate to Republican pressure to privatize Social Security. He still owes Democratic lawmakers for his acquittal; let us hope that they won't let him wiggle out of his debt.

On the negative side, the right to privacy has suffered serious damage. Presidents can no longer speak freely to lawyers and aides. Their words—even those overheard by Secret Service agents—can be used against them in court. This smacks of a police state. Will future presidents use dangerously furtive methods to shield themselves? Will the illiberal precedent affect citizens outside the White House? We don't know yet, but it looks nasty.

Finally, in the realm of custom rather than law, the pool of presidential candidates might be limited to certified monogamists for the foreseeable future. Who else would want to face the scrutiny? Eventually, however, some lusty soul will break the fornication barrier. I base this optimistic prediction on the fact that, despite previous taboos, we elected as president an uncloseted Catholic and a card-carrying divorcé. ●

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Paul Berman

Clinton and the Counterculture

DID BILL CLINTON'S impeachment crisis represent a continuation of the culture wars from the nineteen sixties? My three-part answer is: it did; did not; and vice versa. To wit:

(1) The impeachment did represent a continuation of the old culture wars, if only because a large part of the radical right thought it did. Bill Clinton has wavered in his governmental policies according to the political exigencies of the moment, but he has never wavered in his personality—has never wavered in expressing an air of cheerful informality and natural sensuality, in enjoying a black-influenced cross-over pop music, in having black friends, in being tolerant and friendly to homosexuals, and in having married a woman who is his professional equal. Which is to say, traces of the counterculture of old do seem to be all over him. Those traces have evidently driven a number of right wingers out of their minds. It is because, in a certain kind of right-wing imagination, the counterculture is a program for vice and crime. If evidence turned up tomorrow showing that Bill Clinton really did murder Vincent Foster, the right wing would say: See? The sixties! Remember Charles Manson, the California hippie cult murderer?

And so, the campaign by the Republican right to get the president thrown out of office did represent, in this one respect, a continuation of the culture wars of old—a desperate action by committed reactionaries, blinded by their hatred of the present and their zeal to restore the past. Of course, I recognize that no one among the Republicans or on the right wing would accept my description of their perceptions and motives. But, what can I say? That's how it seems to me.

(2) On the other hand, the counterculture as pictured by crazed reactionaries was always a myth. The actual counterculture, the vague thing that really did exist, was much

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more complicated, and among its complications was a very specific attitude toward truth. The counterculture had a spiritual dimension, which got its start in the old American Puritanism, and made its way into the modern age by way of Unitarianism and literary transcendentalism. The spiritual dimension was, above all, a cult of truthfulness, and a hatred of hypocrisy. It was a rebellion in favor of the direct, the unvarnished, and the authentic, against everything that is tricky and false. Now, from that sort of countercultural point of view, Bill Clinton has never been an attractive figure. On the contrary, his craftiness as a politician has rendered him repulsive to a large number of people who remain committed to the old countercultural cult of authenticity. To people like that, Clinton's sexual enthusiasms and peccadillos have always been especially horrifying. For he has not been direct. He has misled. Sometimes has lied. He has violated the code of authenticity. In addition, he has violated a highly anthropological bias, on the part of some people, against sexual relations between older men and young women—a devastating violation in the eyes of people who cling to that particular sexual taboo.

Clinton's craftiness, combined with his violation of the sexual code, explain why some of the most vehement condemnations pouring down on Clinton's head have not come from dyed-in-the-wool reactionaries but from liberal graduates of the elite universities, where the counterculture long ago helped to shape moral thinking. Those people, in the press and elsewhere, look at Clinton, and they shudder at the spectacle of a man whose inner life is other than transparent, and they shudder yet again at the violations of the sexual code, and the entire spectacle he presents is, to them, unbearable.

Now, if you keep in mind the elite liberal opposition to Clinton—the loathing for him that has been expressed by newspapers like the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* (even if the journalists did not go so far as to endorse the impeachment)—you can see that the political crisis was something other than a continuation of the culture wars. The right wing has been anti-Clinton because it is anti-sixties; but the elite liberal journalists have been anti-Clinton for a variety of reasons, including reasons that are pro-sixties.

And so, the actual relation of the counterculture to Bill Clinton and his scandals was infinitely complicated, and the ex-hippies came down on all sides of the matter. I myself have found Clinton increasingly sympathetic the more his enemies pile on. But far be it from me to identify my own opinions with those of the vast population of my fellow ex-hippies.

(3) How to explain the differences in opinion about Clinton, then, if not by reference to the sixties counterculture? I think that, in the matter of Clinton and his personality and his scandals, there are probably a full dozen points of view, not just two (pro-sixties and anti-sixties), and each of those dozen positions expresses a morality of its own, and each of those moralities derives from a different set of ideas about religion, individuality, sex, and truth. My notion of a dozen positions requires a long explanation, though, and this is not the place to make it. ●

PAUL BERMAN is the author of *A Tale of Two Utopias: The Political Journey of the Generation of 1968*.

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Jeffrey C. Isaac

Post-Impeachment Blues

FOR ANYONE who cares about democratic values, the most significant thing about the impeachment debacle was the vapidity of the surrounding debate—its failure to raise serious questions about the structure or future of American democracy. This, and not the question of Clinton's vindication, is its true significance. Indeed, beneath the inflated constitutional rhetoric and salacious media attention, the proceedings reveal some troubling features of the operation of power in American politics today.

One is the Southernization/Dixiecratization of the Republican Party, and the development of a strong mobilization of bias against Clinton and what he is held to represent—Ivy League savvy, feminism, the blues, "relativism," the sixties—that long preceded Lewinsky or even Whitewater. The likes of Bob Barr have been calling for Clinton's impeachment from day one, and certainly ever since his early position on gays in the military. Remember the Vince Foster rumors, spread with malignity by Jerry Falwell? Pundits are fond of pointing out that this antipathy toward Clinton is not borne out by polling data, and have thus concluded that many conservative Republicans must be "voting their consciences." Now, the conscience can be a fairly unreliable arbiter of ethical sensitivity, and there is no reason to doubt that assassins of obstetrician-gynecologists or Serbian ethnic "cleansers" also act on their "conscience." But the simple, arithmetical fact is that Tom DeLay and his compatriots did not simply vote their conscience on impeachment. They also voted on behalf of their hard-core constituency, namely, the Christian Right, which controls a substantial number of state Republican Party organizations and which also dominates the primary process in so many states. Right wingers may not have the general polling numbers, but they make up for this in organizational infrastructure and in the intensity of their beliefs.

Indeed, this points to a crucial fact—that ideological debate and political conflict are still largely structured around legacies of the sixties and around a "culture war" that the conservative right seems to refuse to abandon. The people who run Congress were considered "extremists" twenty years ago; today they are "statesmen" (the irony of having Strom Thurmond administer the oath to William Rehnquist was lost on most commentators). An impeachment process that eight months ago was considered ill-fated and likely to fade away in fact moved all the way to the Senate, where such august "leaders" as Orrin Hatch seconded the most outrageous charges of their supposedly more "radical" House colleagues. The Republican right managed to generate an incredible momentum behind a process with little popular support, and they were able to do this because *they have a great deal of political power*. Indeed, they wield this power in ways that often defy the conventional logic of class politics. How else to explain how Bill Clinton, the most Republican of postwar Democratic presidents—he has presided over the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and the end of "welfare as we know it"—is hated and challenged by conservatives amid "prosperity." Isn't it ironic to see Democrats preaching about "business confidence," while Republicans prattle on about "civic virtue"? The Republicans establishment that continues to enjoy a political mobilization of bias has succeeded in sustaining cultural polarization—rather than class polarization—in American politics.

WHICH BRINGS me to my final point. It might be argued that there is solace in the fact that public opinion was so clearly at odds with this right-wing cul-

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tural agenda. Might this not suggest a basis for a revitalized left liberalism? What people really care about, insist E.J. Dionne and many other progressives, are "middle-class dreams" or prosperity and Social Security. That's why they like Clinton, and why they yearn for a new progressive agenda. The problem with this argument is twofold. First, it is not clear how deep support for Clinton really is. A case could be made that this pro-growth constituency is fairly shallow and in any case it is *unorganized*. "Public opinion" may not be with Falwell, but it is not clear that it is with anything. Certainly it is not clear that it backs a revitalized democratic left. Second, there is the very credulity with which most Americans seem to treat "the Clinton prosperity." This suggests that citizens are disinclined to ask deeper questions about globalization, financial instability, poverty, or economic insecurity. It is hard to see how such a public is readily amenable to a serious left agenda.

It is thus hard to think about the impeachment events without being somewhat depressed. Perhaps there is consolation in Newt Gingrich's departing in disgrace. But his successors in the House seem worse. And the cover of his recent book presents him looking rather fit, and happy, as if harboring some special information unavailable to his detractors. Gingrich in 2004? Stranger things have happened. ●

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Wendy Kaminer

Feminists, Puritans, and Statists

FEMINISM'S ideological diversity makes fools of those who generalize grandly about the movement, but many critics are undeterred. A foolish view of feminists as a monolithic group of male bashers and prudes was eagerly adopted by impeachment pundits. Confusing feminism with a sexual-purity movement, they naturally pronounced all of us guilty of hypocrisy for not abandoning Clinton, embracing Paula Jones, and fretting about the victimization of Lewinsky. It was as if women's-rights advocates had no mission but the policing of male sexual behavior, as if securing reproductive choice, economic equity, and political power were afterthoughts to the elimination of harassment and adultery.

Where did they get this idea? In part, the pundits relied on tenacious, popular caricatures of combat-booted harridans or spinsters. Rejecting traditional feminine roles, feminists have always been dismissed by some as "anti-sex" or "unnatural." But, in fact, there have always been strains of puritanism within the women's movement, and in the past decade they have become quite pronounced. Clinton's impeachment dramatized their dangers.

The personalization of politics, the devaluation of privacy (long associated with family violence), and the prosecution of sexual sins have all been advocated by some feminists who locate female oppression in male freedom. In recent years, the media may have focused on sexuality debates because of their prurient appeal, but one popular school of feminist thought did identify the vigorous prosecution of sexual misconduct (and censorship of pornography) as essential to equality. The drive to lessen sexual violence and bring some solace to its victims also aligned many activists with right-wing advocates of law and order in their efforts to restrict the rights of men accused of rape. It's true that before the passage of rape-shield laws some twenty years ago, complaining witnesses in rape cases were subject to brutal interrogations of their own irrelevant sexual histories (not entirely unlike the interrogations of defendants in harassment cases today). But to suggest, as some activists do, that we should reflexively "believe the

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women" in rape cases is to endorse conviction by accusation and imbue prosecutors with awesome, unconstitutional power.

The feminist movement has always included civil libertarians and even libertines, but it has never really been defined by them, partly because so much historic progress for women has been secured through the intervention of the state: the criminal law gradually began punishing rape and other forms of abuse (within or outside of marriage), and civil rights laws have provided women with unprecedented educational and professional opportunities. Neither colleges and universities nor the marketplace responded voluntarily to women's demands for equality. They responded under force of law. It's no wonder that many feminists have looked upon the state more as a partner than a potential oppressor.

Statism is a predictable temptation for civil rights activists, but among racial minorities it may be tempered by mistrust of prosecutors and police, grounded in hard experience. African Americans in New York City today are not apt to feel protected by police. Yet many white women probably do. As individuals, white women may have been treated unjustly, even cruelly, by law enforcement officials when they reported sexual assaults or beating by their husbands. But, as a class, they have virtually no history of being systematically brutalized by police or wrongfully prosecuted and convicted of crimes on account of their sex. I suspect that middle-class white women, who populate the feminist movement, are more likely to see themselves as crime victims, allied with the state, than as suspects, wrongly accused.

Reviewing the prosecutions of Susan McDougal and Julie Hiaat Steele and the coercion of Monica Lewinsky, perhaps some will reconsider. Perhaps the spectacle of the Starr investigation will awaken some feminists to the horrors of a prosecutorial state, with no respect for sexual privacy; perhaps it will inject the movement with renewed regard for liberty, even when it is utilized by men. The most predatory male in the impeachment saga was Ken Starr, not Bill Clinton.

Mistrusting the state and embracing or at least appreciating liberty does not require feminists to abandon their drive for civil rights. Civil liberties and civil rights do sometimes conflict (consider the debate to regulate verbal workplace harassment), but intelligent activists can entertain and balance conflicting ideals. They can recognize the difference between government regulation of corporate or institutional behavior in the public sphere and the regulation of individual sexual proclivities or speech. They can demand restrictions on the power of the state when it is turned against individuals.

The feminist movement has always been torn between demands for individual autonomy and the collective advancement of women. Lately, autonomy has been in disrepute, associated with selfishness and anomie. Is it naive to hope that impeachment will revive respect for it? Clinton didn't betray feminists by fooling around with Lewinsky. He betrayed the principles of liberty for which feminists should stand when he advocated and signed legislation drastically limiting appeals of wrongful state court convictions, expediting the summary deportations of legal immigrants and allowing for secret trials of suspected terrorists. Clinton has championed restrictions on due process and expansions of unaccountable police power. He has been the victim of the kind of prosecutorial excesses his administration encouraged. His politics, not his personal life, is what should make feminists shudder. ●

Wendy Kaminer, a public policy fellow at Radcliffe College, is president of the National Coalition Against Censorship.

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Richard Rorty

Saved from Hypocrisy

THE BEST thing about the impeachment fiasco is the failure of the Republicans to tempt the public into hypocrisy. The electorate refused to treat lying about one's sex life as a big deal. This is a great boon for the faction within the Republican Party that appeals to selfishness rather than prurient self-righteousness. With any luck, the leaders of that Party will now decide that they will get little mileage out of stepping up their gay-bashing, anti-abortion, and "family values" campaigns. So the greedheads may dictate future Republican strategy. The hypocrites of the Christian Right (sometimes known as "cultural conservatives") may be forced back into the shadows.

This is, of course, not an unmitigated blessing. The greedhead Republicans may, the next time they manage to elect both a president and a congressional majority, finish repealing the New Deal. They may get enough tax cuts through Congress to make social programs impossible, and then proceed to "privatize" Social Security. They are quite capable of arranging things so that still more of the nation's wealth is diverted to the suburbs, and of duping the taxpayers into sending their Social Security money to stockbrokers rather than to the Treasury Department.

But at least the greedheads are waging a relatively clean version of class warfare. They are making straightforward, nonhypocritical appeals to the suburbanites to harden their hearts against the poor. They are not trying to reduce politics to a battle between the pure and the impure, the saved and the damned, the people who feel the proper sort of outrage about illicit sex and those so depraved as to disregard sexual behavior when deciding on the merits of political candidates.

The poll results, which demonstrate what William Bennett describes as an inexplicable lack of outrage, suggest that at least two-thirds of the electorate hold two beliefs: (1) A poor boy from Arkansas who can make it to the White House, and there do his impotent best to keep the greedheads at bay, deserves a break; (2) The decision of the Republican majority on the House Judiciary Committee to get as much sexual detail before the public as quickly as possible was disgusting. It was disgusting because the office of the presidency is, and ought to be, sacred. We do not want to know everything there is to know about those who hold it, any more than Catholics want to know everything that the media can discover about the idiosyncrasies of prelates.

Snobbish *New Yorker*-reading academics like myself did not expect the broad masses to care more about the numinous chief magistracy of a constitutional democracy than about sex in high places. We imagined that they had been so corrupted by trash journalism, sex-and-violence television, and fundamentalist wowsers that they had forgotten all about their birthright as citizens of a republic. We thought that they would pretend to feel the outrage that Bennett expected of them, in the hope of getting still more dirty details to make locker-room jokes about. We were, thank God, at least two-thirds wrong.

IN THE CLINCH, the broad masses acted just as Tocqueville hoped they would and feared they would not. They reacted as do soldiers who, having no illusions about the moral character of some of their officers, nevertheless "salute the uniform, not the man." Armies could not function unless soldiers did this—unless they took pride in their uniforms and their units, despite knowing that sometimes they will be used for base purposes and will take orders from corrupt leaders. The United States cannot function as the founders intended unless the citizens can take pride in

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investing a poor boy from Arkansas with the august dignity that befits the successor of Jefferson and Lincoln, and then refusing to let the foolishness of the man diminish the office. This time around, the electorate as a whole demonstrated a better sense of the requirements of American citizenship than did the political and chattering classes. •

RICHARD RORTY is the author of *Achieving Our Country: Leftist Thought in Twentieth-Century America.*

Jon Wiener

The Media and Impeachment

TWO TIME-HONORED beliefs about the media were dented by our impeachment year: the right-wing notion that the press has a "liberal bias" and the left-wing theory that the media control public consciousness. Thanks to independent counsel Kenneth Starr, both now require fundamental rethinking.

For the right, the epitome of the "liberal press" is the *New York Times*, which endorsed Clinton in both elections, preferring him to George Bush in 1992 and Bob Dole in 1996, and has supported most of his policy initiatives. Yet in the Monica Lewinsky matter, when Starr's abuse of power posed a far greater threat to liberal principles than anything the president did, the *New York Times* repeatedly devoted its editorial page to scathing denunciations of the president—more scathing than anything it had previously published about presidents Reagan and Bush. An example: "Until it was measured by Kenneth Starr, no citizen—indeed, perhaps no member of his own family—could have grasped the completeness of President Clinton's mendacity or the magnitude of his recklessness." (September 12)

Between the first revelations of the president's affair with Lewinsky, and the last day of the House proceedings on impeachment, the *Times* devoted fifty-five editorials to the topic (see Michael Tomasky, the *Nation*, January 4, 1999). Only two *Times* editorials were devoted to questioning Starr's investigative techniques (while occasional sentences in other editorials also did so). The administration and the independent counsel battled on many issues of law—whether Secret Service agents should be compelled to testify, whether White House lawyers could be subpoenaed, and so on—and on every one of these issues, the *Times* urged the courts to side with Starr. (The one exception, Tomasky points out, came when Sidney Blumenthal was compelled to testify about his contacts with the press, but that issue involved the paper's own self-interest.)

Other newspapers went farther than the *Times*: 140 newspapers ran editorials calling on the president to resign—including *USA Today*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, the *Seattle Times*, and the *Denver News*.

But many of the papers calling for Clinton's resignation had not endorsed him for president and always leaned toward the Republicans in editorials. The *Times* remains the target of critics on the right complaining about "liberal bias" in the media.

SO WE must ask why the *Times* would repeatedly denounce the president for his personal conduct while failing to criticize the independent counsel. Some have argued that the *Times*'s editorial writers sincerely thought that the president's sexual misconduct required the paper's fullest criticism. But the *Times*'s criticism of Clinton began years before Lewinsky appeared on page one, starting in 1992, when then-Governor Clinton was running for the Democratic nomination in the first primary—New Hampshire. The *Times* ran

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a front-page story, the first to accuse him of financial misconduct as governor in a real estate development called Whitewater. Since that day, the paper has run an incredible 349 stories, columns, or editorials on Whitewater, suggesting presidential misconduct in almost every one. So it's wrong to say the *Times* has opposed Clinton because of his sexual misconduct; it has been obsessed with bringing him down since the New Hampshire primary.

A SECOND explanation for the striking absence of "liberal bias" in the *Times*'s coverage of Clinton is more complex: it's precisely the *Times*'s reputation as a liberal paper that has led its editors to bend over backwards to prove they can be critical of a Democratic president. Criticism of Bill Clinton's conduct in this view is fully compatible with liberal principles. But this is not a terribly convincing argument, since the principles at stake in Ken Starr's pursuit of the president go far beyond Bill Clinton as an individual: they include government abuse of power, the rights of those accused, prosecutorial misconduct, and due process—fundamental issues for all liberals.

A final explanation is that the *Times* is still trying to overcome its late start on Watergate, which enabled the arch-rival *Washington Post* to win the Pulitzer Prize and claim credit for Nixon's resignation. Never again, the *Times* apparently vowed, would it be outdone by another paper in exposing presidential misconduct. That's why the *Times* started on Whitewater and then moved on to Lewinsky. No doubt there is some truth in this interpretation—the *Times* is indeed obsessed with the *Washington Post*. But there is another explanation for the paper's editorial policies: its failure to make Starr's misconduct the central issue suggest that the *Times* may not be a paper with a "liberal bias."

A SECOND theory about the media and politics has also been undermined by our impeachment year: the argument that the media shape public consciousness. This argument comes from the left—that the media, increasingly centralized in a few global corporations, sets the agenda for public attention, defines the range of permissible and impermissible arguments, and silences alternative views.

Indeed it's true that a few giant multinationals control our media, as the *Nation* magazine documented in its special issue on "The National Entertainment State" (June 3, 1996). Television, film, newspapers, and publishing are dominated by seven corporations—Murdoch's News Corp., which owns Fox; GE, which owns NBC; Westinghouse, which owns CBS; Time-Warner; Disney-ABC; and Viacom. "The corporate super-powers . . . impose their Market-think with thoroughness and zeal," Mark Crispin Miller wrote. In 1998, their thoroughness and zeal brought us all-Monica, all the time.

But despite virtual media unanimity that the Lewinsky scandal was a terrible thing, the public famously failed to agree. The president's approval ratings, measured with the precision of science, remained in the sixties virtually from the beginning to the end of this matter. Ordinary people made up their minds promptly in the first week or two, and then resolutely stuck with their position, refusing to be budged by the most intense and prolonged media spectacle of the decade. This undeniable fact of public resistance to the media agenda, this overwhelming evidence that the great majority are capable of independent and appropriate judgment about vital political issues, provides the only happy ending to this otherwise miserable political year. ●

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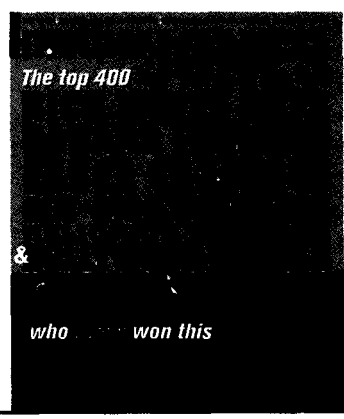

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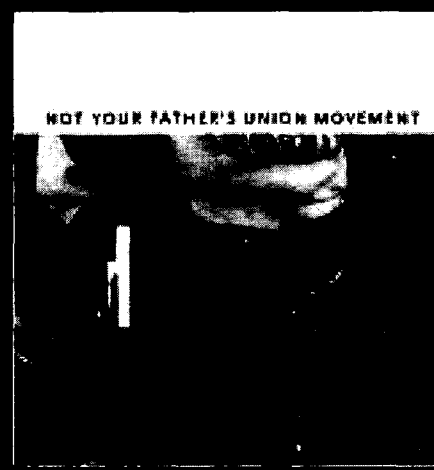

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The Russian Crisis

Thomas Nowotny

WHY DID the Russian economy go into a nosedive? Should one blame Russia? Or the capitalist system and especially financial markets?

The crisis built up as the Russian government failed to collect the taxes it needed to finance its expenses. It filled the gap by borrowing money. Originally, this expansion of government debt did not cause apprehension. The level of indebtedness—while increasing fast—was actually quite low by international standards. Also, for most of the time, Russia exported more than it imported. Foreign currency reserves seemed sufficient. Government bonds sold easily because of the high interest Moscow was willing to pay. They also attracted foreign buyers, and many Russian banks borrowed from Western banks (in Western currencies) in order to purchase these high-yielding papers, Western bankers were willing to "roll over" debt when it became due, which was often, as most of the government debt was short term. But the Asian crisis changed the mood of investors. They hesitated to roll over credits and if they did, they demanded a stiff price. Already-high interest rates on government bonds increased further. Servicing this debt became excessively costly.

The collapse came last summer. It had become evident that the state could not meet its obligations to creditors because the burden of debt service would have been greater than the taxes it could collect. The Russian currency had to be devalued because whoever could sell rubles and buy foreign currency was doing so.

At the beginning of 1998 the Russian economy had started to recover after a long decline in which the gross domestic product (GDP) fell to about half of what it had been under communism. In August 1998, when the withdrawal of foreign credits, the flight of capital, and the devaluation of the ruble disrupted the financial system, the downward slide resumed. By December wealth was reduced by another 15 percent; another 7 percent drop is expected in 1999.

AGAIN, WHO is to blame? The Russians or the "markets"? Undoubtedly, the "markets" have to bear their share of guilt. It is evident that the market for Russian government debt had overreached. Bleary-eyed enthusiasm for Russian economic prospects was followed by wholesale pessimism. Money that had more or less been forced upon the country was withdrawn at short notice and new credits became unavailable. This behavior on the part of the financial markets is irrational in the sense that it does not correspond to developments in the actual economy. Over a few weeks, the actual economy cannot have changed as dramatically as the markets for Russian debt.

But, of course, Russia is also a victim of the creeping worldwide economic crisis. Overall demand for raw materials and semi-finished products plummeted; as did the prices for some of the key Russian exports, such as oil, gold, timber, and aluminum. Lower receipts from its exports increased the Russian need for external financing, which heightened the pressure against the ruble.

It is now abundantly clear that massive outside assistance would have been needed by Russia right from the start of the transition from communism in order to sustain the emergence of an efficient, competitive market economy. Some aid was provided either multilaterally through the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the European Union (EU) or

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bilaterally by various countries. What was lacking was a predictable, long-term, and strong engagement. Russia needed a trustworthy partner with deep pockets. There is no world government or world central bank to assume such a role. The sole surviving superpower might have mobilized the international community to provide some viable substitutes, but the United States became rather detached.

Washington now argues that it is mainly up to Russia to extricate itself from its predicament. The point is both right and wrong. It is wrong because under all circumstances, and especially in the current ones, Russia is dependent upon massive assistance from wealthier countries. The argument is right because outside assistance will be useless without basic changes in Russia itself. Although world financial markets deserve sharp criticism—the Kremlin was badly misled by them—they still had provided capital to Russia. It is a fact that this capital was wasted. Much of it was re-exported to the foreign bank accounts of a few wealthy Russians. The massive inflow of foreign capital was simply not used to eliminate basic flaws in the Russian economy.

The most obvious flaw is the failure to collect taxes. The huge budget gap is not due to exploding expenditures but to ever lower receipts. There were some ups and downs in this rate of tax collection, but the long-term trend was clearly downwards. Corporations especially refused to pay up for the simple reason that the majority of them are broke. So the tax problem was also a consequence of the failure of Russian enterprises to adjust to new circumstances and to become viable and productive. This failure caused the dramatic decline in industrial and agricultural production. This is why Russia now has to import nearly one half of its food and why its social situation is worsening, with rising poverty, alcoholism, and a lowering of life expectancy.

From Economics to Politics

Political consequences were inevitable. Polls—and also elections—show that voters now prefer the old centrally planned economy to the current "capitalist" one by a wide margin. If they compare life under the old system to today's, only a small minority can discern a change for the better. The vast majority is worse off by far. In the face of national decline, general insecurity, and pervasive corruption, they also opt increasingly for the old political structures. Democrats are now a minority.

Was communism really better? Can anyone say it was better adapted to Russia's specific problems and traditions?

If we look at the experiences of some other ex-communist countries further to the west, we can see that they too suffered a decline after the breakdown of communism. But they have largely recuperated by now. Social conditions that had worsened have become better. Inequalities in income ceased to widen. Those countries are now on their way to becoming "boringly normal." They will be able to enjoy both greater wealth and democratic governance. Nonetheless, they started from a low base. Communism had retarded their long-term development. This becomes evident if one compares the economic development of such countries as Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Hungary compared to countries that were never communist. At the dawn of World War II, the wealth of these three countries was much closer to the European average. Countries such as Spain and Italy that had been in comparable circumstances in 1937, but that followed a "capitalist" path, developed much more rapidly.*

It would seem that Russia too, would have been better off following a "capitalist" path and therefore ought to resist the present temptation to return to its earlier ways. Some nonetheless believe that despite all of its shortcomings, communism was suited for Russia because of Russia's distinctiveness. It could not be compared to Central and Eastern Europe. Or so the argument goes. In 1917, Russia was still a feudal, agrarian society. A confident bourgeoisie had not yet developed and there was no entrepreneurial tradition. Religion was

*If the average wealth of all of Europe is 100, the wealth of Czechoslovakia was 79 in 1937 and 44 in 1992. The figures for Bulgaria are 39 and 26; for Hungary, 63 and 36. This is in comparison to Spain's 51 and 81 and Italy's 81 and 105.

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obscurantist and anti-rational. For geographical reasons, security and thus military issues had always dominated economic calculations. Remote from the centers of European modernity, its politics were shaped by the imperial court.

All these are valid observations. Russia's peculiarities certainly complicated Russian modernization. But all of these impediments were present in Japan too, and Japan became the world's number-two economic power. In fact, many of the "Russia" factors are present in all countries on the threshold of economic and political modernization and they haven't condemned to failure all efforts to catch up with democratic and richer lands. In short, these factors did not force communism on Russia as the sole means to promote development.

Yet if Russia's present problems cannot be ascribed to its conditions at the outset of communism, that doesn't mean that unique difficulties are not at play. These are essentially twofold (a) communism existed for a longer period in the Soviet heartland than in (most of) its satellites; and (b) from the very specific character of events in Russia since communism collapsed.

Soviet communism aimed to be a "westernizing," "modernizing" movement. It flaunted urbanization, schooling, public health care, modern weapons, space travel, and so forth. But these highly visible achievements are not the essence of modernization. Pluralization is. It is both a consequence and a precondition for an ever wider and broader division of labor, which, in the end, has to be based on efficient common institutions. These, in turn, depend upon civic culture, trust, and the habit of cooperation. Here is where communism failed and, especially in Russia, did not promote the accumulation of these kinds of "social capital." It actually destroyed what little had existed at the beginning of the century. Still this doesn't have to mean everlasting economic and political backwardness; this process can be reversed. Civic, economic, and political culture can grow again in favorable circumstances. In the long run, living in a democratic society nurtures democratic attitudes.

"Expert" Advice

But postcommunist Russia misconceived and mismanaged its transition to a market economy and to democracy; hence economic growth has been beyond its grasp, and so, too, political stability. Of course, all these are interlinked. And not all of these failures are homegrown. Ill-founded, prejudiced advice from abroad is also to blame. Foreign "experts" created unrealistic expectations and helped to set the whole process of economic reform on a path that was bound to end in the present disaster. These highly paid economic advisers peddled visions of a perfect economic order and never initiated a real dialogue with the Russians. One of their chief prejudices concerned the speed of transformation. Both the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) insisted that rapidity was the key to success. They implied that the only plausible factor limiting speed could be lack of political wisdom or courage. It sounds enticing: Who would nor prefer one single, very sharp but short pain to a long-lasting one? Who would not prefer one large surgery to endless meddling with all kinds of cures? Unfortunately, the option of sharp, short, and complete change was never realistic—even in countries (such as Hungary or Poland) that had already dismantled some elements of communism prior to 1989. It was even less realistic for Russia.

It is true that some rapid changes were possible. Prices of most products can be liberalized quickly, as can foreign trade. A central planning apparatus can be dismantled and political freedom and elections established in a short period of time. But such changes are cosmetic if not supported by deeper transformations in the expectations, attitudes, and behavior of persons and institutions. This takes much longer and depends on a successful learning process and on positive feedback from prior steps taken by a new regime.

Economists are notorious for disregarding history and institutions. The basis of their elaborate intellectual constructs is "homo oeconomicus," conceived as being the same in all times and places. This mythical being could simply change in any which way and at will institutions, values, and expectations. All that would be needed is maximal freedom for

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that all-knowing, self-transforming creature. This was the creature the Russians were supposed to embody. Simply breaking their communist fetters would open for them the road to success. Entrepreneurship would not have to be cultivated; somehow it would be there, pre-cooked, ready to serve. Jeffrey Sachs imagined in 1993 that "events have disproved the idea of a 'homo sovieticus'. . . . as soon as liberties were established new entrepreneurs surged forward from the Elbe to Vladivostok."

If he visited Vladivostok in 1998, Professor Sachs might have to reconsider. Little entrepreneurship can be found there; only endless inefficiency, decay, corruption, and crime. Evidently, Sachs and his like were wrong. They believed that one "could cross the abyss in one bold jump," that one could alter everything. In fact, change required time—more specifically, a time of transition, of being neither here nor there; neither in communism nor in perfect democracy and a market economy. Hence the need for a step-by-step approach and for intermediate solutions.

COMPLETE FREE mobility of capital, for instance, might be useful in a "perfect" market economy. But this cannot be accomplished overnight. It was only in the early 1990s that Europe's wealthiest lands removed the remaining controls on the movement of capital. Former communist countries were urged nonetheless to lift such restrictions right away. Some resisted this advice, and many who accepted it came to regret it. Their capital markets are still shallow and poorly regulated. By moving in and out quickly, short-term foreign capital (portfolio capital) often wreaked havoc, leading to untimely revaluations or devaluations and damaging rises and falls in local interest rates. The consequence was instability in young and untested financial systems. Countries in transition from communism would have been well advised to maintain some control over foreign capital flows. Efforts to create more sophisticated financial institutions should have been pursued cautiously because they are difficult to manage. Even advanced Western Europe finds it hard to attain the U.S. level of expertise and institutional savvy for success in security markets. But caution was not counseled. Instead, western applause urged on breakneck efforts to establish stock exchanges. They were, after all, symbols of having become truly "capitalist."

Ditto the liberalization of prices. Economic "theory" says it is wise to abolish all price controls as rapidly as possible. Yet history demonstrates that there are some exceptions and for good reasons. For example, supply follows demand very sluggishly—if at all—when it comes to the market for rental apartments. Prices generally "overshoot" and become too high to clear the market. Freeing prices for rental apartments therefore does not result in their increasing availability. Instead it only makes for rent inflation in times of social hardship and declining real wages. In the meantime it boosts rental income for the few well-to-do. Even fifty years after World War II, most West European countries still think it wise to regulate the market for rental apartments. The same logic is valid—more so—for countries in the turmoil of transition.

Free trade is a fine thing—in theory. Practice is another matter. Major highly developed countries almost always shielded their production from foreign competition in the early phases of industrialization. For today's transition countries the shield is provided by undervalued currencies which make foreign products expensive and local products cheaper. But this policy has drawbacks; and in some cases tariff barriers would be a wise complement.

Accelerated inflation was inevitable after the demise of central planning. At that time, at the outset of transition, very drastic measures to constrain it might have made sense. The situation became increasingly problematic, however, as enterprises failed to adjust to rapidly changing circumstances, and proved incapable of producing basic items such as food and textiles. Adjusting to meet demand would have required higher investments in those enterprises. Investments in the real economy, however, can be high only if interest rates are reasonably low. Still, western advisers continued to speak as if the main problem was not insufficient supply but an overabundance of money (and credit). They therefore called for high interest rates. Consequently, the money tended to go to the only

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debtor who could pay such rates, the government. This was to the detriment of other potential debtors who might have invested the money to produce dearly needed goods. In nearly all of the formerly communist countries, the decline of investment led to a fall in agricultural production and to drastic de-industrialization. The economic structures in the former lands of the Soviet Union are today even less adapted to actual demand than in the era of central planning.

A WISER APPROACH to politics was also needed. Here too, the West European experience can provide some guidance. Several European countries—such as Switzerland, the Netherlands, or Austria—have been riven by ethnic or religious strife in the past, and these old wounds can be reopened through polarizing politics. That is why official constitutional arrangements have been supplemented by "neocorporate" elements that assure all groups of some participation in political decision making regardless of the outcome of competitive elections. Such schemes have successfully promoted national reconciliation. Similar fractious cleavages exist in many of the former communist countries. They have led to civil war in some (Croatia, Serbia, Albania), and simmering tensions in others (Macedonia). Competitive democracy can itself become inflammatory when political parties exploit such problems for their own narrow ends. Some neocorporate structures would have usefully supplemented constitutional designs, but this was not in textbooks on "pure" democracy.

Ideological Privatization

The prevalence of ideology over practical considerations had its most damaging consequences, though, in the process of privatization. The shortcomings of the old, state-owned firms were obvious. Management skills were deficient; there was underinvestment in sales and marketing; inputs and outputs were overstocked; there was limited access to capital; there were skewed internal incentives and dysfunctional habits and traditions. The list goes on. How could one overcome these problems? Privatization has some benefits but it could not provide what was essential: a supply of capable and willing managers, new markets for many of the products of the large Russian firms, and the capital urgently needed for investment (the idea that Russian enterprises would gain substantial capital from issuing stocks was outlandish). Obviously, then, privatization could not be an easy, speedy, and quasi-spontaneous process. By itself, privatization doesn't produce the inputs needed for an efficient transformation of formerly state-owned firms. They must come from other sources, either the national government or foreign investors or foreign countries and international organizations.

Any such help alone cannot and should not salvage firms with no prospects of survival in the harsher conditions of a market economy. They have to be closed. That is never easy, especially if they are large ones provide jobs for whole communities. That is why democratic polities need to intercede to soften these sorts of blows with active labor market policies, a tight social safety net, regional development policies, and efforts to attract direct foreign investment. If plant closures become widespread, an expansionary macroeconomic policy is needed to stimulate the economy and to promote the emergence of new firms to soak up unemployment.

This outlines the policies that might have been suggested by a practical adviser concerned to adapt Russian firms to market requirements. Most of the economists had only one very simple suggestion instead: privatize. Just establish "ownership." Put "homo oeconomicus" in charge. After that, everything will arrange itself.

Consider a small if revelatory incident. My country, Austria, was in dire straits after World War II when it received Marshall Plan aid. Much "catching up" had to be done. One form of American assistance that proved particularly effective was the establishment of "productivity centers" to teach entrepreneurs and employees a broad range of skills and know-how. After 1989, Vienna urged the OECD to see this as a useful example. Austria financed an OECD inquiry into whether similar experiments could assist ex-communist countries. Top-ranked OECD officials finally dismissed

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the idea on the grounds that markets would solve all existing problems much faster than such "interventionist" methods.

This story is representative of a whole approach to economic and political transformation. Russia in particular was not provided with practical advice on how to overcome the difficulties that were bound to arise on the way to democracy and the market. Instead it was provided with an idealized vision of what could be at the end. Sure the process would be painful, but it would be short. Unfortunately, part of the Russian political elite–the now discredited "reformers"—believed all this. Russian reality insisted otherwise.

An intellectual, political, and institutional vacuum was the result, and it was filled by often anarchical and criminal forces set free by the collapse of the old communist institutions. "Privatized" firms, lacking new "owners" in any economic sense of the term, have been highjacked and plundered. Production has collapsed. Most political parties represent their own leaders and not the voters. The point of public service seems to be personal power and enrichment. Banks do not profit by an optimal allocating of capital but through emptying the treasury by subscribing to over-priced government bonds. Everything is demanded from government, while nothing is rendered to it. Taxes are not paid. Massive capital flight rather than growing foreign direct investment has been the consequence of easing capital transfer. Finally, protection is not available from police but bought from assorted mafias.

Most Russians were probably never taken in by the promises of instant perfect democracy and wealth. They would have been patient as long as steady progress was discernible. It was the absence of credible, intermediate goals and successes that led to today's generalized, destructive cynicism. "Reform" now has a pejorative connotation, and Russia is drifting away from the other countries of Europe.

Who Is to Blame?

Again, who "lost" Russia? The largest share of blame is certainly with the Russians themselves and especially their politicians. The world financial markets are also guilty. They created an illusion that Russia was on solid ground when, in fact, it was floating on a bubble. The bubble was punctured as western capital withdrew from emerging markets. Western economic institutions and western economic advisers are culpable too, because Russia's reality, practical solutions, and the problems of transformation were never their chief concern. Their own ideological delusions were primary.

But the left should also be cautious in its conclusions. The failure of an unrealistic vision of a "pure" capitalism is not the left's victory. The Russian crisis is only one very specific dimension of a major economic crisis that threatens a repeat of the 1930s. This prospect tells us nothing beyond the fact that capitalism is inherently crisis-prone. This can hardly come as a surprise. But even a painful, full-fledged world crisis would not affirm any feasible alternatives, and desperate attempts by Russia to find one will end in disaster.

What Russia's crisis proves is that markets are constructed in processes that need political guidance together with the support of strong and efficient public institutions. Democracy and economic efficiency are not mutually exclusive but support one another—and they need to be buttressed by social concerns and a framework of efficient public and private sectors. Finally, though, Russia's crisis warns us against ideological purism and arrogance, especially when it comes from economists. ●

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Kosovo: The Beginning of the End

Bogdan Denitch

Kosovo is where the final disintegration of Yugoslavia began. It is there that the Titoist settlement of the national question in Yugoslavia broke down irreparably in 1990. The immediate issue was the decision of Slobodan Milosevic, the leader of Serbia, the largest federal unit of Yugoslavia, to abolish the wide autonomy enjoyed by the province of Kosovo under the Constitution of 1974.

Kosovo is Yugoslavia's West Bank, with Serb nationalism confronting the reality of a huge Albanian majority, by now over 85 percent. Serbian claims to Kosovo, much like Israeli claims to the West Bank, are based on a mixture of strategic considerations, historical assertions, and mystical religious themes. Ultimately the Serbs believe that the special historical suffering of their people—namely, five hundred years of "slavery" under the Turks (aided by Muslim Albanians) and huge population losses in the two world wars—gives their claims greater weight than those of the present inhabitants of Kosovo.

For the Albanians, too, Kosovo is tragic ground. It was there, in the late nineteenth century, that modern Albanian nationalism was born. The Balkan wars of 1912 against the Turks were wars of liberation for the Serbs but wars of brutal conquest to the Kosovo and Macedonian Albanians. The Albanians bitterly resisted integration into Yugoslavia and were subjugated by military force after both world wars. The international community treated them much as it did the Kurds, and only slightly more than half of the Albanians ended up living in an independent Albania. Nevertheless, Tito's communism produced enormous progress in literacy and development for Kosovo. After its first two decades it also produced wide political and cultural autonomy, which in effect made Kosovo a second Albanian state. Although the least developed part of Yugoslavia, it was far more prosperous and modern than Albania itself.

The bigotry that most Serbs feel toward the Albanians makes coexistence with mutual respect and tolerance in one state unlikely. These Serbs proudly claim that they themselves are civilized and European and that their Muslim enemies are not. This view is held not only by supporters of the Milosevic regime, but also by many in the democratic opposition. Even Vesna Pesic's Civic Alliance, the urban middle-class party most favored by do-good foundations and Western embassies, departs from its otherwise fine record of fighting for human rights and democracy by insisting that Kosovo must stay within both Yugoslavia *and* Serbia. This is unacceptable to even the most moderate Kosovo Albanians.

Ever since Tito's death in 1980, the Kosovo Albanians have been agitating to gain the status of a republic, like the other federal units, rather than the near-republic status within Serbia they had been granted by the Constitution of 1974. At first, they wanted to stay in Yugoslavia but to be as independent of Belgrade as Macedonia, Bosnia, Croatia, Montenegro, and Slovenia were. The Kosovar agitation was met by increasingly chauvinist Serbian propaganda in the state-controlled media—abetted by most of Serbia's intellectual establishment (both communist and anticommunist)—and with repression, culminating in the abolition of the province's autonomy in June of 1990.

With this act, Milosevic accomplished three things, all of which proved disastrous for the future of Yugoslavia and even for the Serbs. By purging Kosovo's established pro-Yugoslav leaders, he assured their replacement by Ibrahim Rugova, who was committed to an independent Kosovo. For almost a decade Rugova has led a remarkable massive nonvio-

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lent struggle—in one of the most undeveloped parts of the Balkans—establishing a parallel underground "state," with its own schools, medical centers and political institutions. Second, Milosevic entered into an alliance with Serb nationalists, and directly encouraged the Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia to demand self-government for their ethnic enclaves within those republics. Third, this in turn provoked the growth of Croatian nationalism, leading to the election of the right-wing ultranationalist Tudjman regime in Croatia.

THE GROWING chaos convinced the leaders of Yugoslavia's most developed republic, Slovenia, to secede unilaterally in 1991. The Yugoslav army only half-heartedly tried to prevent this. In the event, Slovenia's declaration of independence was rapidly followed by those of Croatia, Bosnia ,and Macedonia. This left the present rump Yugoslavia, composed of the Republic of Serbia with the provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo, now stripped of their autonomy by Belgrade, and the Republic of Montenegro.

However, while poor and underdeveloped Macedonia was permitted to secede peacefully, Croat and Bosnian independence led to a bitter war with the local Serb militias, which were reinforced by what remained of the Yugoslav army. The Serbs in Bosnia and Croatia did not want to become minorities in the new national states. One of the more successful multi-ethnic states in recent European history thus ended in ethnic carnage.

Although the numbers are bitterly disputed, it seems that only about fifty people, mostly young Serb conscripts, were killed in the Slovenian "war" of independence. Something like twelve thousand people, mostly civilians, were killed in the Croatian war, while the Bosnian wars cost at least one hundred thousand lives. Two and a half to three million people became refugees, ethnically cleansed to create "pure" Croatian and Bosnian entities.

Rump Yugoslavia remained multi-ethnic with one third of the population consisting of Albanians, Hungarians, Muslim-Bosniaks, and Croats. The low-intensity war in Kosovo in 1998 produced relatively few casualties—two to three thousand at most—but many refugees, perhaps a quarter million.

The successor states that emerged, with the possible exception of Slovenia, are poorer and less independent than authoritarian Tito's Yugoslavia had been. Individual citizens are also much poorer and less secure. The middle class has been economically destroyed and replaced by a new gangster elite. And people of all classes are less secure because of the terrible crimes that have been committed in the names of their various ethnic communities.

Peace Versus the New Elites

The new ruling elites in the post-Yugoslav states, sometimes with roots in the old communist *nomenklaturas*, have prospered mightily during the wars of Yugoslav succession, accumulating wealth and power in the old fashioned way—by robbery. Even the economic sanctions helped, because they provided vast opportunities for smuggling, which became a patriotic act. In these countries, where no legitimate money was available to buy the formerly public or state property, the prescription by the United States, the International Monetary Fund, and World Bank to "marketize and above all privatize" guaranteed a gangster economy.

The new politicians, generals, and volunteer militia heads have devastated the land, committing atrocities that spur huge population transfers. This new class born out of the intra-ethnic wars of Yugoslav succession thrives on ethnic confrontation and relentlessly fosters ethnic chauvinism, preventing any transition to stability and democracy.

After all, any responsible democratic government in Croatia, Bosnia, and above all in Serbia, will have to engage in the equivalent of denazification: the ousting and punishing of the butchers in the present political elites. The trouble is that those who need to be removed from public life and deprived of their ill-gotten property are the elected leaders of government. They remain in power by insisting on the presence of external and internal threats. This is made easier by their control of the most powerful electronic media, reinforced by a public opinion wallowing in self-pity and poisoned by a decade of nationalist propaganda.

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Alas, the West and above all the United States continue to treat these corrupt regimes as legitimate governments and indispensable guarantors of the ramshackle peace agreements negotiated essentially by the Americans. The United States was the architect of the Dayton agreement, which ended a terrible war in Bosnia with a miserable peace. It was Washington that built up the Croatian armed forces before 1995, making possible the single biggest case of ethnic cleansing in the Yugoslav wars of secession, in which nearly two hundred thousand Croatian Serbs were driven into an exile which still bedevils democratic politics in Croatia. The United States also advised the Bosnian government to reject repeated peace agreements negotiated by the Europeans, thereby prolonging the carnage by at least two years. Sadly, the political lesson drawn from this was that no agreement could be made without the Americans. While British, French, Italian, Dutch, Scandinavian, and Spanish soldiers lost their lives in Bosnia, the United States only provided air support. Until Dayton, that is, when it became clear that without American ground troops there would be no peace agreement.

The United States, it seems, wants to be a superpower without deploying the appropriate resources. Through its on-again, off-again threats to use force—especially during the Rambouillet negotiations on Kosovo earlier this year—Washington has destroyed its credibility.

Nowhere has this been clearer than in Kosovo. The 1995 Dayton settlement contained provisions on the region, which provided for two thousand armed "observers," in a no way a substitute for a robust deployment of troops. In fact, they have functioned as two thousand hostages. The agreement left at least fifteen thousand heavily armed Serbian police and troops and Kosovo as well as an armed and encouraged Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).

In this winter's Rambouillet peace negotiations (whose final resolution is still uncertain as *Dissent* goes to press), the United States has maintained the same pattern of empty threats. The initial peace proposal itself was not bad: it would have granted Kosovo wide, internationally guaranteed autonomy, but not independence. This autonomy would be enforced, during a three-year truce, by twenty-eight thousand NATO troops, and the Serbian regime's presence would be reduced to 1,500 border patrollers.

But the United States and NATO negotiated only with the KLA and with the Milosevic regime—neither of which has strong credentials to speak for most citizens on the ground in Kosovo. And to make matters worse, NATO played its hand awkwardly. It was never clear, for example, what Madeleine Albright's threats to bomb Serbia were meant to achieve: if massive enough to do real damage, there would be unacceptable civilian casualties; if more modest, they would be no more effective than the air strikes against the regime in Iraq.

In the meantime, despite renewed Serbian aggression, the KLA is not only surviving but prospering mightily at the expense of other political forces in the Albanian community. It is taking over whole villages and towns in Kosovo, occupying the abandoned Serbian police bunkers and pushing aside the local Rugova leadership, often by brute force.

Toward a Democratic Settlement

The basic mistake made by the United States and Western Europe was their assumption that the governing thugs in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Sarajevo would remain the only political partners available. This has strengthened these regimes and made stable peace impossible. Washington modernized Tudjman's army and police, which remain a constant threat to democracy in Croatia. Bosnia's Izetbegovic has used his control over the vast aid sent into Bosnia to tighten his stranglehold on a government and army where religion is being introduced. This makes the development of a multi-ethnic, secular, and democratic Bosnia all but impossible.

The worst predator in the area, Milosevic, has been strengthened the most. A shallow Machiavellianism led the United States and Europe to imagine that he could be a force for stability in the region; this is a game he understands all too well. To make sure he remains the lesser evil he has taken Vojislav Seselj's semi-fascist Radical Party as a junior partner in his government. The paralyzing message is, "If I fall, the alternative is Seselj!"

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He has resumed his crackdown on an already weak democratic opposition. With the enthusiastic support of the Radicals he has abolished university autonomy, dismissed opposition faculty in massive numbers and passed a repressive law that has all but destroyed the independent media.

THE WEST needs to advance a short-range policy that gives Kosovo the status of a self-governing entity within a looser Yugoslavia. Kosovo must be independent of Serbia and Belgrade, whether it is called a republic or not. Such a settlement must have iron-clad international guarantees and firm guarantees of minority and democratic rights. Kosovo cannot become a squalid repressive *bantustan* dominated by hard men with guns. This means that those Albanian forces—like the former communist leader Mahmut Bakali—who are pushing for such a solution should be strengthened. But a democratic Kosovo cannot long exist in an authoritarian Yugoslavia controlled by Milosevic and Seselj—so help must often be given to the principal Serbian oppositionists of today, even if they are not inspriring and are themselves too nationalistic. In the long term, the smaller, "hard"—non-nationalist—opposition has to be supported. The "hard" democrats tend to be independent trade unionists, nongovernmental organization activists, students and democratic leftists with populist overtones. They have been less attractive to U.S. policy makers than English-speaking, well-dressed, deodorant-using liberals who are devoted uncritically to privatization and the free market. Of course they have one problem—they can't attract any substantial electoral support.

Serbia, and even Croatia and Bosnia, will either be democratized radically by democratic populist forces or plunged further into nationalist chaos. Given the growing economic despair, there will be no comfortable "centrist" liberal solution. That much is certain. ●

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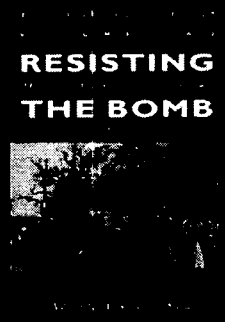

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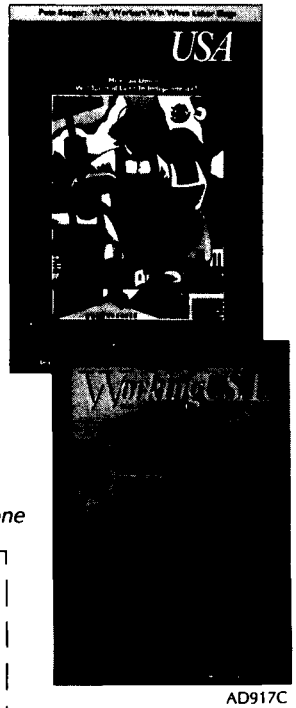

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Prosecuting Latin America's Dirty Wars

"The conduct with which we are concerned are archetypal acts of government or sovereign power. We would contend that where torture is committed in the context of the military forces or internal security police...that still falls within the definition of sovereign or government function."

-Clare Montgomery, Defense Attorney for General Augusto Pinochet,[1] January 25, 1999

"So was Hitler's [Night of Long Knives] an 'official act'"?[2]

-British Law Lord Peter Millet, February 1, 1999

Marguerite Feitlowitz

EVEN IF Augusto Pinochet eventually escapes trial for the widespread torture and terrorism that characterized his regime in Chile (1973-1991), the efforts to bring him to justice in Spain (and lately France, Switzerland, and Belgium) mark a pivotal moment in international human rights law. Longstanding assumptions about sovereignty, impunity, and popular will have been re-arranged in a new calculus that should make the world less hospitable to abusive heads of state and former heads of state.

Pinochet had traveled to London—his favorite city—in October 1998 and stayed on for treatment of a herniated disk. Just before 6 p.m. on October 16, the Spanish investigating magistrate Baltasar Garzón issued a warrant calling for the general's extradition to Madrid to stand trial for "crimes against humanity," as defined in 1946 by the Nuremberg Principles. These "universal crimes against basic humane standards" include systematized killings, torture, disappearance, slavery, arbitrary deportation, forced labor, rape, and persecution for political, religious, or ethnic reasons. Crimes against humanity have no statute of limitation and can be tried at any time in any nation. (This is why, to cite just one example, ex-Nazi Erich Priebke could be tried and convicted in Italy in 1996.) The Nuremberg Principles make explicit that such crimes are committed by "individuals, not abstract entities," and that any person found guilty of such offenses "is internationally accountable and subject to punishment" whether or not he or she is a government official or head of state. Moreover, no one accused of crimes against humanity may offer the defense of claiming to have been "following orders."

The Spanish case is based on no fewer than nine international human-rights treaties and conventions, to which Chile, Spain, and the United Kingdom are all signatories. It is further buttressed by Spanish domestic law, which allows the country to prosecute international crimes in notably progressive and innovative ways. Had Pinochet stayed home, he would have been safe from Spanish courts. According to the laws and conventions cited by Garzón, leaving Chilean territory makes Pinochet vulnerable to arrest for the two hundred thousand individuals tortured during his regime, the three thousand people assassinated, the one thousand "disappeared," and for the five thousand to six thousand buried in unmarked graves.

ON THE very day that Pinochet's attorney, Clare Montgomery, was arguing before the British Law Lords that her

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client was entitled to "absolute immunity" as a former head of state, doctors and forensic anthropologists were searching for the remains of Chilean *desaparecidos* at the site of a concentration camp known as "Dignity."[3] A delegation of ex-navy men testified in the British Parliament that they themselves were Pinochet's first torture victims, and that their brutalization began on August 5, 1973—three weeks *prior* to the coup of September 11. All five of these men—who in 1973 were twenty-year-old junior officers—have given sworn testimony to the major human rights groups and to Baltasar Garzón, the judge who requested that Pinochet be extradited to Spain to stand trial for crimes against humanity. The ex-navy men endured between three and five years in concentration camps, "[an institution] which had never before existed in Chile. It began with us." The five recounted that on August 5 they had informed the secretary general of the Socialist Party that a coup was in the offing. "We thought Allende needed to know," said Sergio Villar. "It wasn't out of party loyalty, but we had sworn to protect the Constitution and wanted that vow to be respected." The arrests, said the delegation, were carried out along a strict chain of command, with "Pinochet [as head of the armed forces] on top of everything." All told, 250 members of the military were arrested and tortured in the weeks leading up to the coup. Pinochet, said one ex-navy man, was like "Saturn devouring his children."[4]

PINOCHET'S public relations team—headed by Robin Harris, an ex-policy adviser to Margaret Thatcher—has spent a fortune attempting to expunge this image from the public mind. Current photos of the general show him as the very essence of a British gentleman: white-haired, rosy-cheeked, and regal in luxuriously sober civilian suits. He praises London for its "civility" and "respect for rules." For close to twenty years he has taken tea with the Iron Lady, Margaret Thatcher, who declared the general's arrest in her capital "outrageous." She describes her friend as old and frail, mournful in the face of mistreatment. Funded by the Pinochet Foundation in Santiago, the public relations team has published pamphlets and articles, placed ads and set up a "Chile Reconciliation" Web site, all with the same message: In order to save the world from "universal chaos," sovereignty must be respected absolutely; and Chilean democracy requires a collective move away from divisive issues. To ensure the Chilean "peace process," the general must come home.[5] Yet an independent survey done in Chile in late November 1998 tells a different story: 63 percent of citizens believe that Pinochet is guilty of the crimes of which he is accused; 66 percent are convinced that Chilean democracy is unthreatened by the arrest of Pinochet; 82 percent oppose any boycott of British consumer products. Perhaps the most telling finding is that 71 percent find their lives unaffected by the general's arrest. Only 2 percent are "enraged" by the efforts to try Pinochet; 6 percent are "saddened."[6]

Montgomery's defense of Pinochet is deeply flawed, on logical, legal, and moral grounds. The absolutist interpretation of sovereignty comes down to an argument for impunity; the disregard for half a century of human rights law seems not merely anachronistic, but insensitive to the need for universal basic protections; the insistence that only Chile can legitimately address its past seems hypocritical—not only in light of the amnesty Pinochet decreed for himself in 1978 when he re-wrote the country's Constitution, but also because in early January the relatives of several of the regime's most prominent victims (including Isabel Allende, daughter of Salvador Allende, and Juan Letelier, son of Allende's foreign minister Orlando Letelier) were charged with "criminal conspiracy" for having publicly supported the extradition process and for having told their stories to the European press.[7]

On October 16, 1998, when Baltasar Garzón issued his original extradition order for Pinochet, the action seemed to many like a bolt from the blue. But in truth it was the logical result of two years of painstaking investigations in Spain into both the Argentine and Chilean dictatorships. Which is not to say that there are no surprises in this story. Indeed there are—at every point along the way. For starters, if Garzón had not previously been investigating Argentina, he never would have got

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to Pinochet. And neither would anyone else. The Chilean case had for months been languishing in the files, because the investigating magistrate had buckled under pressure from factions in Madrid and Santiago.

The Spanish action on Argentina stands out because it was started not by the government, or by a "rogue magistrate," as some detractors have claimed, but by popular initiative—against the advice of lawyers who said it "would never fly." Moreover the case was not started through the efforts of those who were seeking redress, but through the passionate empathy of individuals unconnected to the events. "In fact, I hardly knew any Argentines," reflected Carlos Castresana, the forty-five-year-old attorney who on March 28, 1996 filed the *denuncia* that got the process rolling. The twentieth anniversary of the "Dirty War" coup had fallen four days earlier, and Castresana was inspired by the demonstrations, documentaries, and news reports that flooded Madrid. "It was the Mothers of the Plaza who overwhelmed me," he said. "I could not get their images out of my mind. Twenty years later, here was a case of absolute impunity, one of the clearest anywhere in Latin America." I first saw Castresana in action last June at a panel devoted to the trial. Speaking without notes, he electrified the audience that overflowed the ballroom of Madrid's ornate Círculo de Bellas Artes. "The essential point," he stressed, "is that this trial is not Spain v. Argentina. It is an offering from one court of law to the victims of the Argentine repression who have been unable to find justice in their own country. It is from Spain to Argentina; not Spain against Argentina. Our emphasis is on the future. To all those who commit atrocities we say: *There will be no safe haven, no place for you to hide.*"

Castresana smokes nonstop and talks intensely in long, well-crafted paragraphs. He runs through the history of the Argentine National Commission on the Disappeared, which in the first year of the new democracy did the groundwork investigation into the missing; the 1985 trial of the ex-commanders, which resulted in the convictions of the leaders of that repression; the further prosecutions of lower-ranking repressors. "All of that was crucial," Castresana stresses, "but much of it got undone." Thousands of torturers and repressors have escaped prosecution in Argentina.[8] "Still," Castresana insisted, "after all these horrible blows, there was enormous effort on the part of human-rights groups, and popular—even political—will to investigate those crimes. To fight against oblivion and impunity."

Castresana was struck by reports about a trial that had recently begun in Italy and about efforts to begin prosecutions in France and Germany. Why, he wondered, was nothing being done in Spain, where nearly a thousand of the victims had their roots, and where about a million Argentines had come as exiles during the repression? "That was our original incentive," he said, "but we had no fresh details and we had to rely on work already done in Argentina." That would radically change as the investigation gathered momentum and international guidance.

Castresana drafted the *denuncia* with his colleagues at the Union of Progressive Prosecutors, a professional association founded in 1981. These mid-career lawyers started with little specialized training. Spain signed the major human-rights treaties only after the death of General Francisco Franco, who ruled Spain from 1939 until 1975. "No one took us seriously," I was told by Castresana and every other lawyer involved in the case. "It was like we were children playing with a toy—that's how the Establishment viewed the whole area of human-rights law." And for this reason the investigation proceeded unmolested for eighteen months—until Garzón began issuing arrest warrants for high-level military men.

In this case there are three main groups of plaintiffs: the Argentine Association for Human Rights in Madrid; the Free Association of Lawyers; and Izquierda Unida (Unifed Left), a consortium of six political parties. Castresana's original *denuncia* followed all the usual channels: it ended up with Garzón through the normal round-robin distribution system in the National Court: In Spain, it is the *Juez de Instrucción* (in this case, Garzón) who actually carries out the research, calls witnesses, takes sworn testimony, and structures the trial (with extensive input from the lawyers for the plaintiffs). Another judge

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will render the verdict.

The Spanish case against Chile was filed in Valencia on July 4, 1996, by Miguel Maravet, then president of the Union of Progressive Prosecutors. From the outset, the Salvador Allende Foundation has supported this process; Joan Garcés, former legal, economic, and political adviser to President Allende, has represented the victims of Chile's repression.

An irony of these prosecutions is that for the last century Spain had one of the most anachronistic and provincial legal cultures in all of Europe. Its domestic legislation went untouched from 1870 until the 1970s. Yet under Franco the country developed some unexpectedly helpful laws—originally directed against Basque separatists—which enable it to reach out internationally and prosecute acts of terrorism. With the death of Franco, the country incorporated all of the major international treaties and conventions—"in one fell swoop," as I was told by one Spanish judge. In the mid-1980s, jurisdiction for universal crimes was inscribed into the Spanish penal code and other bodies of domestic law. These instruments, however, had mostly lain fallow. Until the explosion last October of the Pinochet case, many Spanish jurists remained unclear as to their substance, scope, and significance.

By October 1998, the Chilean case in Madrid had been dormant for approximately five months. Under pressure from Spanish and Chilean business, military and political factions, the investigating judge, Manual García Castellón, had agreed to shelve the investigation. I was told by Spanish attorneys and judges close to the case that the pressure was so intense that García Castellón had even left Madrid, requesting a lower-ranking job in the relative backwater of Valladolid. Garzón, a forty-six-year-old former seminarian, seems to thrive on opposition. He too had been ordered to halt his investigation, but he refused. In the interviews I conducted last summer, a host of leading jurists from Italy, France, and various nations of the Americas praised him as "visionary," "beyond courageous," "the man the whole Establishment wants to kill." He has sentenced Basque terrorists to prison terms exceeding a century and put drug lords away for almost as long. In 1995, his investigation of the secret government-sponsored death squads that killed twenty-eight Basque liberation activists living in France quickly brought down the administration of the socialist prime minister, Felipe González. He has also investigated González's more conservative successor, José María Aznar, for irregularities in the handling of intelligence documents, and corralled elusive operations for the sheltering of white-collar money. For Garzón, death threats are routine; his phones are bugged; last year he found a microphone in his bed. When the Chilean investigation was re-opened last October, García Castellón voluntarily stepped aside so that Garzón could take it over.

Well before his investigation hit the international press, Garzón had told his closest legal advisers that the most important case of his career was the one that until recently "no one paid attention to." Since the spring of 1996, Garzón had sat in his small, rather Spartan office near the Plaza Colón and listened to the sworn testimony of individuals from all sides of the ghastly Argentine equation: survivors of the torture camps and relatives of *desaparecidos*; ex-policemen who had spent the last twenty years hoarding secret documents; obstetricians, nurses, and midwives who attended *desaparecidas* as they gave birth blindfolded and chained only to be killed so their babies—"seeds of the Tree of Evil" in the parlance of the regime—could be "saved" by military families. Hundreds of Argentines have now testified in Madrid; to date there are over twenty thousand files in Garzón's investigation. On the last Argentine dictatorship—and on the international banking, business, and intelligence operations that helped it along—there is far more information in Madrid than anywhere else on earth. It was Garzón who first thought to follow up on hints that high-ranking "Dirty Warriors" maintained secret Swiss bank accounts for the money, jewelry, and property titles they extorted from prisoners and the desperate relatives of *desaparecidos*. Well over one hundred such accounts have been discovered, several with millions of dollars. In fact, about four hours before signing the extradition warrant for Pinochet on October 16,

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Garzón embargoed the assets and froze the bank accounts of 152 Argentine officers implicated in the abuses of the last repression.

Garzón's direct link to Pinochet was Operation Condor, the code name for what Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Bolivia jointly established in 1973-1974 as an "Interpol for subversives." In sworn testimony many Argentine survivors have said that they were tortured in Argentina by men with identifiable Chilean, Paraguayan, or Bolivian accents or kidnapped while traveling elsewhere in Latin America. Sometimes they were sent back to their native countries for the "coup de grâce." In Buenos Aires, the concentration camp known as Automotores Orletti specialized in "foreign subversives"; its counterpart in Chile was Villa Grimaldi. From Alberto Pedroncini, one of Argentina's most prominent human-rights attorneys, Garzón received a host of materials, including a declassified FBI cable sent to Washington from Buenos Aires on April 9, 1976, which described Chile as the "center" or "headquarters" of the Condor operation, with Argentina and Uruguay being notably "enthusiastic." The cable also included information on special Condor groups whose mission was "to travel anywhere in the world . . . to assassinate so-called [leftists, communists, and Marxists]. France and Portugal were named as probable harbors for "subversives."[9]

More incriminating still is a letter provided to Garzón by the Uruguayan author and journalist Samuel Blixen: on September 16, 1975, Manuel Contreras, then head of the brutal Chilean secret police (DINA) requested from Pinochet $600,000 for the "neutralization of the principal adversaries of the Junta who live abroad." Contreras—one of the few men convicted in Chile for crimes committed during the dictatorship—was asking for ten new agents: two each in the embassies of Argentina, Brazil, and Peru, and one each in Belgium, Costa Rica, Italy, and Venezuela. He also argued for additional monies to cover operations in Mexico, the United States, and France.[10] Also entered into evidence on Operation Condor are documents from Paraguay, specifically the Archives of the Terror—discovered through a series of police tips in 1992 by Martín Almada, today the president of the American Association of Jurists. In 1974, Almada was himself kidnapped and tortured in Argentina; his son, a medical student and the president of the Paraguayan Students Association at the University of Córdoba, was murdered there in 1976. Almada's documentation—five tons of papers, tapes, files, and microfilms—distributes primary responsibility for Condor among Pinochet, Argentina's General Jorge Rafael Videla and Admiral Emilio Massera, Paraguay's Alfredo Stroessner, and Bolivia's past dictator and current president, Hugo Banzer.[11] The most famous victims of the Condor were Chilean ex-President Bernardo Leighton, murdered in Rome; and Orlando Letelier, killed in Washington (with his U.S. associate Ronni Moffitt, an employee of the Justice Department). Against Carlos Altamirano, the secretary general of the Socialist Party, there were several assassination attempts, in Spain, France, and the United States. The numbers of less well-known Latin Americans "caught in the claws of the Condor" rise into the thousands. Hundreds are named in the documentation furnished to the Law Lords by Garzón.

FROM THE beginning, Pinochet's judicial process has been exquisitely careful and transparent. The Spanish case for extradition is represented in London by the Crown Prosecution Services. Garzón has been permitted to attend hearings and advise his British colleagues. Pinochet is represented by Herbert & Smith, one of the most elite British firms. On October 28, 1998, the Law Lords (Britain's highest court) ruled that as a former head of state Pinochet was immune from prosecution in the United Kingdom. That decision was appealed by the prosecution and overturned on November 25, paving the way for the general's extradition. *That* ruling was overturned on December 17 when Pinochet's lawyers charged "bias": Lord Hoffman (who had voted in favor of extradition) has long had public connections to a charity affiliated with Amnesty International. So a new panel of Lords was selected—seven this time, instead of the previous five—and it was decided that both the government of Chile and Amnesty International could be parties to the proceedings. The hearings took

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place from January 18 until February 4, when the Lords adjourned to prepare their ruling.

This round of hearings crystallized the proceedings. The prosecution once again made the case that as head of the armed forces and the governing Junta, Pinochet was responsible for massive crimes against humanity; and that torture, hostage-taking, and forced disappearance are in no wise legitimate acts of state. Anticipating rebuttals from the defense, they added that *even before he was named head of the armed forces or head of state*, Pinochet had conspired to commit torture, kidnap, and other human-rights abuses. (The case of the tortured navy men helps substantiate this point.) From the beginning, the prosecution has stressed the historical depth of its support. The team cited the major precursors of the Nuremberg Principles, all of which came about in response to instances of mass brutality. Central among these are the 1864 Geneva Convention (on the humane treatment of combatants and civilians during war) and the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907, which further codified these rules and established a forum for international accountability with the Permanent Court of Arbitration (located in The Hague). Also marshaled is the May 24, 1915 Declaration by France, Great Britain, and Russia that the massacre of Armenians committed by the Turkish Ottoman Empire constituted "crimes against humanity and civilization for which every member and representative of the Turkish government would be [internationally] accountable." The prosecution reminded the Lords that the UN Declaration of 1946 specifies that signatories (among them Chile, Argentina, Britain, and Spain) have not only the right but the obligation to prosecute criminals against humanity. No nation, according to a host of UN treaties and conventions, may grant asylum to individuals or officials accused of universal crimes.

In representing Spain, the Crown Prosecution Service employed other legal instruments in a more "surgical" way. Of special note is the 1984 UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The 1961 Vienna Convention—whose Article 14 defines diplomatic agents (ambassadors, papal nuncios, government ministers and representatives, and so on) and diplomatic business—is cited to establish that Pinochet's trip to England can in no way be considered official, thereby depriving him of diplomatic immunity from prosecution. A combination of international and Spanish domestic laws counters the defense assertion that Pinochet is safe from extradition because he was amnestied in Chile in 1978 (a pardon the general himself had written into the Constitution) and because he is "Senator for Life." The United Nations and the International Court of the Organization of American States (OAS) have both made it clear that domestic amnesties do not apply to universal crimes. Morever, the Spanish Constitution specifically prohibits executive pardons and legislative amnesties; Article 69 rules out designations like Senator for Life because they "distort" the constitutional system based on the democratic election of parliamentary representatives.

Of all the issues at play in these proceedings, torture has remained the most tenacious. Even the most reputedly conservative Lords kept coming back to it. In her defense of Pinochet, Montgomery asserted (erroneously) that international crimes are limited to war and other types of armed conflict. "Torture," she declared, "is a national crime."[12] Montgomery's cool technicalities visibly offended some of the Lord Justices: "It's like *Alice in Wonderland*," interrupted Lord Phillips at one point. "It seems to me that [torture, kidnapping, hostage-taking] are much more crimes against humanity when they are inflicted on an [undefended civilian] population."[13] As president of the court, Lord Browne-Wilkinson set the tone early on: "If torture is not an international crime, then what is?"[14]

Lawrence Collins, the attorney who represents Chile, conceded that the UN Convention Against Torture grants jurisdiction in this matter to Spain. But here as elsewhere he attempted to split procedural hairs. Signing on to the convention implies no waiver of immunity, Collins asserted.

Although Collins several times "deplored" the events that occurred in Chile during the 1970s, he never once gave a name to those crimes and insisted that the accusations had

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yet to be proven.[15] Not only did Chile here attempt to discredit the Rettig Commission and the work of human-rights groups like Amnesty, it disparaged the reliability of the extensive testimony by survivors and relatives of *desaparecidos*. Here is where the argument for sovereignty becomes a discourse on history, on the need for marginalizing—indeed silencing—those who have been abused or who witnessed the atrocious treatment of others.

So what hangs in the balance as we await the decision of the Lords and, perhaps, the resolution of Pinochet's trial in Madrid? A half-century has elapsed since the acceptance of the Nuremberg Principles, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the UN Charter. Despite repeated cases of massive slaughter and abuse, the application rate of these human-rights instruments has been dismal—vitiated by claims of sovereignty, jurisdiction, and *realpolitik*. The Spanish prosecution may well change that. Amnesty International has called this proceeding "the most important human rights-trial of the century."

The remonstrations of Pinochet's counsel make clear that too often "democracy" is invoked to refer not to codified rights of representation but as a stand-in for *modernity* and the economic trappings that are its major tropes. That he improved the Chilean economy has so far been Pincohet's most surefire defense. Castresana has consistently warned that "transitional democracies often mask deeply-entrenched repressive traits and practices. And so a helping hand is in order."

Horacio Mendez Carrera, one of Argentina's most prominent human rights attorneys, told me that the Spanish prosecution "has pumped new energy into our courts. These cases that have recently put nine high-ranking military men in jail for baby-trafficking during the regime would never have happened without the positive pressure from Europe. Only now [March 1998] did our Parliament finally find the courage to derogate the laws of Due Obedience and *Punto Final*."[16] Since that vote, prosecutions have been reopened or initiated in various Argentine provinces. Tucumán established the country's first Truth Commission, in response to Garzón's arrest warrant for its governor, Antonio Bussi, who was in charge of several torture camps during the dictatorship. "The Spanish investigation," stressed Mendez Carrera, "teaches us that no one is beyond the law, an important lesson for a country like ours where human-rights legislation has a deplorable history."

In Chile, the excavations of *Colonia Dignidad* are likewise a response to the energizing forces of international interest. Even though amnesty laws frustrate the resolution of some fourteen pending prosecutions, attorneys have recently renewed their efforts. In early February, a group of elderly women announced that after decades of anguish over their missing grandchildren, they would found their own group of *Abuelas*, modeled on their Argentine counterparts.

Yet there is also some legitimate concern that if Spain should prevail in these extradition hearings, it could encourage vendettas against former officials and heads of state. The worry is that the international travel required for government, diplomatic, and financial business will be endangered out of sheer vengeance. The ruling issued by Britain's Law Lords—and also potentially by Spain's National Court—will create landmark precedents in international law. The acuity of the judges' reasoning, their skill and honesty with evidence, and their grasp of history must meet the most exacting humane standards.

The United States watches tensely as these proceedings unfold. Because Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger, the Central Intelligence Agency, and their associates helped orchestrate and finance the coup against Allende and because Chile murdered both Letelier and Moffitt on U.S. soil, the country could well be implicated further down the road. The National Security Archive—and to a lesser extent the Justice Department—has provided Garzón with a host of CIA, FBI, and State Department documents. Will the United States prosecute on behalf of Moffitt? Will Kissinger—who signed documents explicitly calling for the overthrow of Allende—be vulnerable to international arrest? Time will tell.

"Will Pinochet and Co. ever be brought to trial? That's a very North American question," quipped Richard Wilson, Director of Ameri-

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can University's International Human Rights Law Clinic, and an adviser to the Spaniards on both Argentina and Chile. "The investigation *has already* prospered. The victims of these crimes have waited decades for some effective vindication, for the opportunity to go before a judge who would *listen to sworn testimony and write it down*. All over Latin America there are people who have died—or who are willing to die—for the opportunity. That speaks volumes for the importance of this process, whatever the eventual outcome." ●

MARGUERITE FEITLOWITZ is the author of *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture*, named a *New York Times* Notable Book of 1998.

For periodic updates on the Pinochet trial visit the *Dissent* Web site at www.igc.org/dissent.

1. Sue Quinn, "Torture a State Function—Pinochet Defence," *The Guardian*, February 2, 1999. Montgomery's statement was widely quoted in the international press.

2. Ernesto Ekaizer, "El Gobierno chileno deplora 'la dictadura,' pero defiende los 'actos publicos' de Pinochet, *El País* (Madrid), February 2, 1999.

3. See "Chile: allanan Colonia Dignidad," *Clarin* (Buenos Aires), January 25, 1999.

4. Telma Luzzani, "Con nosotros se inauguró la tortura," *Clarin* (Buenos Aires), January 26, 1999. See also "Ni los militares se salvaron," an interview with Sergio Villar in *Página 12* (Buenos Aires), January 26, 1999.

5. Jonathan Calvert and Andy McSmith, "Look Who's Coming to the Rescue of Augusto," the *Guardian*, January 17, 1999; and Mark Honigsbaum, "Pinochet Groupies Fly in to Combat 'Vendetta' Against their Hero," the *Guardian*, January 24, 1999.

6. The survey was done by MORI in Santiago, Chile. See *El País*, December 3, 1998.

7. The *Guardian*, January 17 & 24, 1999. The charges were brought by General Odlanier Mena, who became chief of Pinochet's secret police in 1978. Two other socialist MPs were charged: Juan Bustos, a human rights lawyer and Fanny Pollarolo, a physician who works with survivors of Pinochet's torture camps.

8. The 1984 Due Obedience law enabled lower-ranking torturers and other human rights abusers to claim that they were merely "following orders" (a violation of the Nuremberg Principles). *Punto Final* established February 23, 1987, as the cut-off date for trials related to the Dirty War.

9. Alberto Pedroncini is the attorney for the *Abuelas* [Grandmothers] de Plaza de Mayo, and is most recently responsible for the incarceration of eight high-ranking military officers for baby-trafficking during the Dirty War. Excerpts from his testimony to Garzón were generously provided to me by Fernando Mas, who has covered this investigation since 1996.

10. Samuel Blixen is the author of *Operación Cóndor*. See J.C. Sanz, "Un documento vincula a Pinochet con la persección de opositores en el extranjero," in *El País*, January 22, 1999, for a synopsis of his testimony.

11. Martín Almada escaped from Paraguay in 1978 with the help of Amnesty International; he was granted asylum in France where he worked for UNESCO until returning to Paraguay in 1989. I have relied here on Fernando Mas's interview with Almada.

12. "Torture is not an international crime, say Pincohet defence," the *Guardian*, January 27, 1999 (by *Guardian* staff and agencies).

13. Ernesto Ekaizer, "Uno de los lores tacha de fantasiosa a la defensa del general Pinochet," *El Pais*, January 28, 1999.

14. Ernesto Ekaizer, "La defensa de Pinochet dice que sus delitos no tienen jurisdiccón internacional," *El País*, January 27, 1999.

15. Ernesto Ekaizer, "El Gobierno chileno deplora 'la dictadura,' pero defiende los 'actos públicos' de Pinochet," *El País*, February 2, 1999.

16. In Paris in 1987 Mendez Carrera won the conviction in absentia against ex-Navy captain Alfredo Astiz for engineering the deaths of two French nuns connected to the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo.

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The Trouble with Difference

Linda Gordon

Since the late 1970s, feminist theorists and scholars have been attacking, subverting, and attempting to dethrone the universalist liberalism of earlier women's-rights advocates who spoke in the name of a unified, homogeneous womankind. From that point on, the dominant motif in women's studies and in much multicultural scholarship became "difference," the insistence on a multiplicity of identities and subjectivities among subordinated people. This break with the universalism of an elite feminism following in an Enlightenment tradition represented a considerable advance for feminist theory. Fragmenting universalist assumptions helped reveal previously invisible or even suppressed understandings of inequality and domination. The idea of difference contributed to similar multicultural explosions in other corners of progressive and democratic thought and activism.

But the centrifugal force created by anger against an elite left's universalist claims has had negative consequences as well. The explosion set into orbit an indeterminate number of independent identities traveling in no apparent relation to each other. Those who peer at the skies of progressive possibilities sometimes find that no generalizations can any longer characterize what is progressive and democratic and what isn't. It is not the articulations of many different axes of oppression that is problematic but the way in which these are isolated insights, their authors not attempting to theorize larger historical patterns. It is not the numerous foci of identity that are problematic but the solipsism of these identities.

I want to argue that the idea or slogan of "difference," and its policy-talk analog, "diversity," serve as inert placemarkers that reduce rather than enlarge analytic power to take in the complexity and trajectory of our world—not the first time that an advance at one historical moment has become limiting at another. This little essay is not intended as another attack on identity politics. I see no reason to regret anything about the elaboration of multiple and even contradictory social oppressions and identities. But I fear that difference- and diversity-talk are acting as substitutes for more specific and critical concepts such as privilege, contradiction, conflict of interest, even oppression and subordination, as well as obscuring bases for potential cooperation.

The difference talk I examine here developed in two streams within feminism: Difference I, gender difference, and Difference II, differences (racial/ethnic/religious/class/sexual) among women, the latter also called diversity. They are opposite meanings in some ways: the more we emphasize differences between men and women, the more we implicitly erase differences among women and among men. Yet the very strength of the first contributed to the development of the second.

Gender Difference

The most important single theoretical premise developed by second-wave feminism has been the notion of gender. Despite recent challenges to the apparently firm distinction between sex (biological) and gender (cultural), showing that even "sex" is an ambiguous category, the widespread understanding of gender as a social construction represented a major development. Gender was a directly transformative idea: through its manipulation not only scholars but also activists and even many women who considered themselves apolitical were able to challenge and change popular thought, daily divisions of labor, power structures, and scholarship too. Speaking of "gender" got some men to do housework; helped

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girls play sports and study science; spurred women to become doctors, construction workers, and bosses; allowed many women to come out as lesbians; empowered women to alter the terms of their relations with men, to demand equal treatment at work and at school, to win, however partially, greater reproductive rights.

THE NOTION of gender refined two opposed lines of thought within feminism. For several centuries now the feminist project has contained contradictory tendencies: One emphasizes the common humanity of men and women and the relatively unformed "human nature" of infants into whose psyches culture inscribes gender. Gender contains, feminists might say with Freud, both the triumph and tragedy of humanity, because it inevitably constricts as it reproduces culture. This could be called the androgynous strain in feminism because it seeks to reduce gender difference. Often identified with Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman, this tradition protests the gender norms that shrink women's bodies, minds, and spirits by restrictions in law, in the economy, in education, and in culture—restrictions that pigeonhole what women may do and how they should act. So the very formation of femininity is inseparable from male supremacy.

A second feminist tradition, present all along and dominant in the late nineteenth century, celebrates gender—that is, female uniqueness—and downplays the idea of a common human nature. Its advocates claim that the human ideal has been a male ideal, and decry the devalorization of women's "ways of being," thinking, feeling. These were the suffragists who argued for the vote on the grounds that with it women would protect the sanctity of the home and purify society. Feminists of this sort worry that certain versions of feminism—those that seek to make women more like men—only worsen the disrespect for the female in culture.

Because both of these feminist traditions are prescriptive as well as descriptive, prefigurative as well as critical, they can become self-proving, because gender is never given or fixed but always being constructed, revised, reconstructed. That is, the more we treat men and women similarly, the more similar they become; the more we honor women's special femininity, the more different men and women become. Similarly with the two meanings of difference: the more we focus on women's shared experiences, the more they share; the more we focus on women's variety, the more varied they become.

Gender, then, was used both to criticize the "artificial" male-female dichotomy and to valorize the previously devalued female side of the dichotomy. In both first-wave (1848-1920) and second-wave (1960s on) feminism, the two attitudes toward gender can only be separated analytically; many of the same individuals used both (contradictory) arguments. But generally speaking, in both waves of feminism, the androgynous strain dominated in the earlier years and the difference strain came to the fore later. After about 1975, Difference I became the primary motif, especially in academic women's studies, used to emphasize the many areas in which women have a different voice, a different muse, a different psychology, a different experience of love, work, family, and desire, and argue that recognizing such difference makes the whole human picture different. This had the advantage of making visible women's own agency in the construction of culture and challenging an earlier emphasis in feminist scholarship on women's victimization as the whole story. Although gender need not be a dichotomous concept—queer theorists, for example, point to the variety, instability, and creativity of the ways that human beings "perform" gender—it has in fact been mainly evoked as binary.

Dualistic comparisons of the male and the female emphasize not only the durability of these forms but extend this design to include many cultural and even political oppositions: the (male) public as against the (female) private, aggressive/peaceful, and competitive/cooperative. Through this logic, some feminists came close to demonizing men and endorsing the conservative stress on women's "natural" domesticity and lack of aggressiveness. And although difference on this view need not be biological, the weight of this kind of talk, whether intended as feminist or as conserva-

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tive, nearly always serves to adduce permanence and unchangeability to these gendered human types.

Talk of female uniqueness had a crucial and material intersection with the rapid growth of women's studies, women's enterprises, women's writing. It helped fight discrimination in several ways: it suggested that women's viewpoints were unique and could not be "represented" by men, and that allegedly objective measures of merit could in fact be male in their deep structure. It provided toeholds in women's steep uphill climb to jobs, grants, publications. Thus Difference I was an effective tool for combating exclusion, for breaking into male bastions—a political tool. And some solid evidence accrued that some women did indeed have a female style that could enrich and expand institutional possibilities.

Yet Difference I talk became, at its extreme, depoliticized. Its roots lay in "radical feminism" in the 1970s, an intensely political critique of male supremacy as the most basic of all forms of domination. But radical feminism was soon eclipsed by a stream of thought and activity known as cultural feminism, which shifted priorities and emphases: identifying maleness, the characteristics of men, rather than male supremacy, a political system, as the root problem; focusing on building women's culture and women's enterprises rather than challenging male dominance directly. As a well-known early statement of this tendency, the "Fourth World Manifesto," put it: "A female culture exists. It is a culture that is subordinated and under male culture's colonial, imperialist rule all over the world. . . [often] women falsely identify with 'their' country's dominant male culture. . . ."

In the depoliticized celebration of femaleness, gender becomes nonrelational. The relations that form gender may not be simple, of course: we need not adopt the conservative model that positions male and female as two halves of a whole, each incomplete without the other. This ideological construct is as distasteful to feminists as to gay rights advocates. But there is a cultural feminist version of Difference I talk that makes an alternative mistake, ignoring the formation of gender in a context of male supremacy and conceiving male and female as essential (or at least ahistorical) entities and autonomous of each other. This conception of "the female" mystifies not only those aspects of gender adapted to male supremacy but also, equally important, those aspects shaped by resistance to male supremacy. As Elizabeth Cady Stanton asked in 1890, "What do we know as yet as to what is womanly?"

The most obnoxious aspect of Difference I talk was the way it tended to homogenize women, even to exclude from womanhood those who could not fit the normative feminine mold. In the last century nothing symbolized this sense of a singular, homogeneous womanhood better than feminists' choice to call their cause the "woman movement" and "woman suffrage," singular. Their singular, repressive, and arrogant definition of what was truly female rested on particular class, racial, ethnic, even imperialist entitlements. Elitism was by no means limited to difference feminists, of course, but their tendency to divide the world into male and female spheres and sensibilities created a greater homogenizing pressure within each sphere.

Second-wave feminism was far more democratic. Its primary intellectual sources were civil-rights and New-Left critiques of racism, inequality, the "power structure," and lack of democracy. The often repeated charge that 1970s feminism was racist and "classist" is usually uninformed and exaggerated. The movement was never homogeneous—working-class, African American, and union women were important among the founders of the National Organization for Women, and black and Latina feminism arose simultaneously with primarily white groups. Women's-liberation feminists were active participants in civil-rights and anti-Vietnam War activism, and developed many projects directed at working-class women. Within the New Left, the strong socialist-feminist tendency never argued that male supremacy was primary but always maintained that race and class domination were equally fundamental.

Still, the almost ecstatic enthusiasm elicited by the rediscovery of feminism in the late

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1960s and early 1970s gave rise to hyperbolic and overgeneralized analyses. Discovering shared experiences was the essence of consciousness-raising groups, and it was easy to neglect the experiences of those not present. In their anger the newborn feminists not only celebrated women but similarly universalized and essentialized what was male. Statements like that of the Redstockings—"All men receive economic, sexual, and psychological benefits from male supremacy"—may be correct but they seemed pretty naive, at best, to women whose male loved ones were victimized themselves. In the early 1970s women's liberation was remarkably optimistic about individual men's ability to support women's aspirations. But as Difference I talk gained purchase, that optimism gave way to a dismissal of men: "prideful and vengeful, image-protecting and loving war, jealous and insecure, omnipotent and in so many hidden ways afraid of women," as one feminist theologian wrote. This in turn alienated those women whose social position—for example, as people of color—made it impossible for them not to feel solidarity with their "brothers" and made it easy for the "brothers" to stigmatize feminism as treason.

Thus feminists' very passion, ironically, undermined cooperation among women. White feminists generalized from their own experience and feminists of color responded by emphatically denying false postulations of sisterhood. The gender-difference emphasis, which arose to protest the male universal, had produced its own universal that in turn produced a new kind of difference talk: about differences *among* women.

Differences Among Women

For people of color, the perception that the dominant ideal of womanhood was white was hardly a revelation. So from the moment that second-wave feminists began talking about "sisterhood" and generalizing about women, feminists of color criticized this approach. Sometimes white feminists showed appalling ignorance of black history; one notorious example was an early exploration of rape that addressed neither the legacy of false accusations and lynchings nor the contemporary racisms of the police and criminal "justice" systems. Jewish, working-class, and lesbian feminists soon joined the critique. In the explosively expanding field of women's studies, scholars began to understand that second-wave feminists sometimes replicated the arrogance of their foremothers in writing sentences that began "Women's domesticity. . ." or "The womanly ideal of delicacy . . ." or "The family responded to the Depression by . . . ," and in other embarrassing uses of "we" and "the."

At first the Difference II model followed Difference I in adopting another binary: black/white. The black/white dichotomy sometimes claimed a depth and resonance comparable to the female/male dichotomy. In this dualism "black" often meant nonwhite; other racial minorities were ignored, giving the white-nonwhite distinction a certainty it does not have in the United States. The dualism was, inadvertently, strengthened by an extraordinarily rich outpouring of African-American women's fiction and prose. Powerful writers brought a distinctive African-American women's culture not only to the academy but to the mainstream media as well; the impact was both to confirm to black people their own integrity as a cultural group and also to confirm white feminists' map of American culture as dichotomously white and black. Some radical women of color offered another dichotomous division, arguing for political unity among "third-world" peoples. "We, the Third World people of Asia, Africa, and the Original Americas . . . victims of racism and ghetto colonies within the United States . . . oppressed because of our color, sex, and class. . . . We believe that the sisterhood of Third World people is an integral part of our national liberation struggles." From Frances Beal's early concept of black women's "Double Jeopardy" there arose a black feminist theory that insisted on dual axes of identity, social position, and injustice. Such a theory was in fact universally applicable, as all human beings live with several definers of their social place, and this was the socialist-feminist line of thought in the early 1970s. But many feminists continued to identify this as a uniquely African-American feminist approach.

Soon, however, Puerto Rican, Chicana,

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Asian-American, and Native-American feminisms challenged the black-white binary. Many feminists of color have been generous and patient in their attempts to work with white feminists even as they labored to educate them, but still, their anger showed. Moreover, the challenge to universalism was not only racial and ethnic. Representing different sexual preferences and family forms became imperative, not only so as to recognize people in those categories but also so as to challenge the putatively "typical" nuclear family. Class "difference" remained the least developed of these forms of diversity, especially inasmuch as these paradigm shifts occurred in an era in which explicitly class-based movements were weak and concepts like working class and upper class, not to mention ruling class, were losing their shared referents.

Feminist theorists acknowledged these multiple identities and pointed out that binary models were themselves ideological, reflecting and even masking the very belief systems they purported to analyze. Academic feminist theory of the 1980s, influenced by post-structuralism, emphasized the fluidity and performative quality of identities. Nevertheless, in an ironic example of theoretical-practical miscommunication, the element of "postmodern" theory that translated into common usage was its attack on universalism, and as a result feminist theory seemed to support and even stimulate the development of new identities among groups excluded from both liberal and New Left political theory: racial, ethnic, and religious groups and identities as gays, lesbians, lesbian mothers, queers.

Although a dualist model sometimes had the advantage of showing how one set of meanings, attributes, or behaviors helps define the other, specifying relationship among a pluralized collection is more difficult. Furthermore, the replacement of dichotomous difference with "diversity" occurred during a conservative time, when the left was not producing social theories that examined relations of power, respect, distribution, and exploitation. Instead, feminists made lists, trying to specify variation without leaving anyone out. One of the weaknesses of "difference" and "diversity" as concepts is that they seem to suggest solutions through mere addition, without looking at patterns of relationship. As Christina Crosby put it, what was once singular was now plural. The model for representing diversity was additive; its prescriptive message was to recognize and respect diversity, not to challenge inequality or build democracy. And the racism condemned by Difference II often seemed mostly a matter of personal failure to offer that respect, not a matter of social structure.

Among the relationships avoided by additive thinking are relations among women. Difference II seemed to justify autonomous and isolated feminisms for different groups. But this meant that white feminism did not much examine the role of blacks in making whiteness or the role of whites in making blackness. For example, African-American women don't only inherit patterns of work, family, childbearing, and child rearing that are somewhat different from those of white Americans. These patterns arose in the context of relationship to whites, a context that includes exploitation, domination, fear, and exclusion, but also, often, intimacy. The same context also includes specific relations with white women—as employees, fellow workers, sales clerks, and so on. Moreover relations among white women—for example, their sense of a shared whiteness and the frequent suppression of their class identity—were constructed in the presence of black women. The identity and social position of, for example, Mexican-American women in the U.S. Southwest developed not only from their interactions with whites but also in relation to the social positions of African Americans, Native Americans, and Chinese Americans. Difference often implies separation, but these relationships frequently involved proximity. A single historical "fact" that can be seen as an artifact of difference—say, that a higher proportion of black women than of white women were professionals in the early twentieth century—was created by relationships between black women and men, between black and white women, between white women and men, between white and black class structures. From this perspective it is a step backward to think about the experiences of white women and women of color, lesbians and straight women, Jews and Catho-

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lics and Protestants, rich and middle class and poor, lawyers and service workers, as merely different. These groups have intersected in conflict and in occasional cooperation but always in mutual influence. The politics of feminism in the last two decades is one such arena of mutual influence.

As the boundaries of different racial and ethnic groups were challenged in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly by those who consider themselves multiracial individuals, feminist academics began to focus on the cultures of borders and contact zones. The antiracist impulse in Europe and Asia produced postcolonial and subaltern studies, which examine the cultural impact of imperialism, colonial rule, and global commerce as well as of local resistances, and the new cultural forms created by their meetings. American scholars have shared this interest, but in this country, by contrast, colonial and anticolonial frameworks are less developed and the emphasis placed instead on migrations and borders. Once again scholarship stresses the meetings and clashes of differences, but in a manner that does not work toward specifying the nature of the relationships.

Worse, in both Difference I and Difference II the new multicultural feminism sometimes falls into an uncritical discourse of pluralism, a celebration of diversity. Political pluralism as a concept developed as a way of distinguishing democracy from totalitarianism; the argument was that interest groups and other civic associations were important to check state power. After World War II pluralism became an often smug legitimation of American anticommunism and as a result evoked scathing critique. Theorists such as Herbert Marcuse and C. Wright Mills exposed the ideological functions of the concept: masking power through the fiction of formal equality where there was no substantive equality. There's nothing wrong, of course, with an appreciation of multiple identities and civic associations, but we need to be wary of pluralist fictions about conflict among interest groups who begin from a theoretically equal position on a theoretically level playing field. Feminists should be the last to be taken in by the notion that scholarship, like society, is an open competitive field, a "free marketplace" of ideas.

As principles for understanding society, "difference" and "diversity" tend to mask power. More, they tend to obscure relationships altogether and suggest, rather, a lineup of isolated identities. This is particularly regrettable in the context of feminism, for one of its main contributions has been to broaden the definition of political power to include many social relations once considered private. Feminists have argued that democracy must pervade all sorts of human relationships. So retreat from the imperatives of specifying relation is a particularly poignant loss. One constricting effect of the diversity model is that "political correctness" can be taken to require respecting the boundaries of the other categories, not crossing the lines—which hardly promotes a democratic discourse or expands our vision of a good society.

Diversity talk tends to prescribe respect and recognition as the solution to racism or other ill treatment. It highlights individual attitudes and behaviors. So if working-class or Latina or disabled or lesbian women felt uncomfortable, ignored, or insulted in white-dominated feminist discourse, the fault can seem to lie with speakers or organizers who failed to acknowledge diversity. The solution was personal re-education rather than structural social change. Many white women's groups, for example, tried to compensate for their lack of sufficient diversity with guilt-inducing individual self-examination. Many feminist organizations, including academic women's-studies programs, developed antiracist programs that encouraged whites to confess their innermost racist thoughts and feelings—but rarely to study, say, the impact of economic globalization on racial formations. Lesbianism was to be conceived as a matter of personal choice and/or innate orientation, and media presentations emphasized how much lesbians were like straights as a means of insisting that they deserved respect and rights; conceiving of lesbians as merely "different" undercut feminist theoretical understanding of gayness as a challenge to the heterosexual family norm.

Both uses of difference have optimistic and

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pessimistic, unifying and dividing, meanings. Gender difference called up hopes of community among women—sisterhood. Differences among women, typically racial, reinforce bonds within smaller groups. Both have offered politically powerful and hope-giving rhetoric in a time when visions of any community larger than family are deeply impoverished. Yet both, too, impeded the imagining of a larger community without inviting analysis of these social fractures or strategies for how to make them less oppressive. Indeed, while calling attention to the need to acknowledge that others have different experiences, "difference" has had a chilling effect on the struggle to recognize connection. At its worst it suggests that communication is impossible, and may thus make actual communicative experience suspect. It may even deter efforts to communicate, which require asking direct questions, risking expressions of ignorance, rejecting the discourse of personal guilt. Just as seriously, difference talk leads us away from specifying the relationships that give rise to gender, racial, class, and many other inequalities and alienations. We need to ask for much, much more than merely respecting difference. ●

AUTHOR'S NOTE: This essay represents my current thinking about some issues I originally addressed in *Genders*, Spring 1991.

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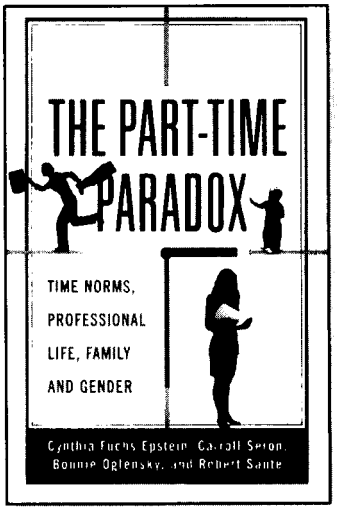

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Toward a New International Economic Order

Washington Consensus, Main Street Alternative

Thomas I. Palley

THE FINANCIAL crisis that erupted in east Asia in mid-1997 has thrust millions of workers back into dire poverty and shattered an entire decade of economic development in the region. The crisis has also flared and spread within the global economy. Russia has undergone a financial collapse. South Africa, which is Africa's largest economy, has had to raise interest rates to defend its currency and faces a significant economic slow down. Now, the process of financial contagion has added Brazil to the ranks of crisis countries, and most economists are predicting a severe Latin American economic downturn in 1999. In light of Brazil's troubles, Newsweek recently went so far as to compare the winter recovery in world financial markets as akin to the "phony war" of 1940, a period when people falsely reassured themselves that calamity would be avoided.

Under such circumstances it is hard to be optimistic. Yet, it is possible that there may be a silver lining to the crisis in that it has forced an opening of debate at the highest levels about the future course of globalization. This opening provides an opportunity to remake the process of globalization in a manner that shifts it away from its current path of unstable and inequitable development, on to a path of stable and equitable growth. If policy makers in the industrialized countries also take steps to ward off a recession, the suffering caused by the crisis will not have been all in vain.

The crisis and its subsequent spread have raised two distinct sets of issues. One set has concerned how to react immediately to the crisis and prevent it from deepening. Here, the focus has been on the appropriateness of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF's) policy recommendations for east Asia and the need for global reflation. The IMF initially recommended a dose of fiscal and monetary austerity in the afflicted economies (Thailand, South Korea, and Indonesia), while the U.S. Federal Reserve viewed the crisis as exclusively regional in impact. The IMF's policies threatened to worsen east Asia's deflation; it has now been grudgingly compelled to allow east Asian governments to run deficits, and east Asian interest rates have also been lowered somewhat. Meanwhile, the Federal Reserve Board has reluctantly come to recognize the U.S. economy's own exposure to east Asia's misfortune, and last October it cut interest rates. However, there is a real danger of Federal Reserve policy turning out to be "too little, too late." In particular, the Fed continues to claim that rate cuts were only needed to calm financial markets, which indicates that it may not yet have recognized the magnitude of weakening of global demand. Moreover, though the Fed has cut interest rates by three-quarters of a percent, this reduction does not match the fall in inflation over the last eighteen months. This means that real interest rates have actually risen.

A second set of issues concerns the structure of the international economic order. Here, the question is to what extent are fundamental flaws in the structure responsible for the crisis, and to what extent are these flaws responsible for the trend of slowing economic development and worsening of global income distribution. This second set of issues is at the heart of the debate over the international financial architecture. How this debate is resolved will critically determine the path of fu-

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ture prosperity.

Though IMF policy in east Asia and Federal Reserve interest-rate policy have both shifted in a more expansionary direction, this shift risks being short lived unless accompanied by recognition of the fundamentally flawed character of the existing global economic order. This is because the thinking that gave rise to the IMF's initial mistaken prescription for east Asia is the same thinking that underlies the structure of the existing order. Absent a rejection of this thinking, the world economy will remain brutally exposed to the unstable deflationary forces inherent in today's global economic order, while policy makers will ineluctably be drawn back toward policies of contraction.

THE DIFFERENCES in thinking regarding the validity of the existing global economic order are reflected in disagreements over the interpretation of the current crisis. On one hand, there is the IMF-Treasury view, which interprets it as a narrow crisis of international financial markets. Hence, Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin's call to "modernize the architecture of the international financial markets." On the other hand there is a view that reads the situation as a full-fledged crisis of globalization that has revealed deep flaws in the design of the existing global economic order.

The narrow financial-markets crisis view is promoted by supporters of the "Washington consensus" that has dominated economic policy making for the last twenty years. It maintains that global economic growth is best furthered by more open trade, export-led growth, greater deregulation, and more liberalized financial markets. It is epitomized by the IMF, which has sought to characterize the crisis as resulting from inadequate financial transparency, and in the aftermath of the crisis the IMF has actually called for greater liberalization of international financial capital flows. All that is required is a minor tune-up of the international financial system, combined with some learning from experience. Thus, "sequencing of reforms" has become a hot new issue, the argument being that countries like South Korea engaged in wrong sequencing whereby they mistakenly liberalized short-term capital flows before long-term flows. Learning means that policy makers will not make this mistake next time, and meanwhile the underlying recommendations of the Washington consensus remain correct.

The Treasury view is broadly similar to that of the IMF. Both the Treasury and the IMF were slow to recognize that east Asia's troubles were triggered by a bank run that had foreign investors rushing to repatriate funds. They therefore both initially supported mistaken policies of economic austerity predicated upon high interest rates, government spending cuts, and higher taxes. Since then, both have reversed these policy prescriptions to a significant degree. However, they continue to see the long-run solution in terms of limited financial market reforms. Thus, we have Secretary Rubin's claim that "these reform programs have at their core strengthening financial systems, improving transparency and supervision, eliminating the inter-relationships between banks, the government, and commercial entities, opening capital markets, and appropriate monetary and fiscal policies."

Whereas proponents of the Washington consensus think that the existing model of globalization merely needs a tune-up, there is a "Main Street alternative" that thinks the model is fundamentally bankrupt. The issue is not one of recalibrating the model, but rather one of designing a new model that is stable, equitable, and pro-growth. For the last twenty years, the Washington consensus has dominated policy making, yet global economic growth has been slower and inequality has risen. In industrialized countries, wages have stagnated, workers are working longer hours, and there has been an increase in job insecurity. Rather than being an isolated event, east Asia's financial crisis represents one more in a succession of crises. As World Bank chief economist Joseph Stiglitz puts it, the world economy has been having "a boom in busts."

At the most abstract level, the Main Street alternative begins by challenging the fatalistic notion that markets and the process of globalization are natural phenomena. All markets and all economies operate on rules, and this applies as much to the markets that have been

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fashioned by the Washington consensus as it did to markets fashioned under Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. If there is any doubt about this, consider the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which is widely represented as a model free trade agreement. In fact, the actual treaty consists of one thousand pages of rules governing trade. Viewed from this perspective, the debate is not one of regulation versus deregulation. Instead, it is about what type of market rules we will have, and whose economic interests they will serve.

The Main Street alternative seeks to modernize the financial architecture, as does the IMF-Treasury view. However, it maintains that the measures to improve financial transparency and accounting standards are nowhere near enough. Instead, a more fundamental reconfiguration of the international economic order is needed. The conversation cannot be restricted to discussion of financial markets. Trade, finance, economic growth, and income distribution are all intimately connected, and this means much more must be on the table. Financial market governance, labor market governance, and the international trading system interact. Producing stable equitable growth requires that all elements of the international economic order be designed in a mutually consistent and reinforcing manner.

When it comes to the financial architecture discussion of specifics quickly reveals fundamental differences between the Main Street alternative and the Washington consensus. The latter seeks more international openness of domestic financial markets, better accounting standards, more financial transparency, and disclosure, and more IMF market surveillance. The claim is that more daylight and more market openness will enhance market discipline, thereby producing efficiency and stability. The Main Street alternative also maintains that improved accounting standards and financial transparency and disclosure are needed, but there is also a need to reduce speculation and make investors invest with an eye to the long term and proper regard to risk. This requires taxes on the buying and selling of currencies to reduce speculative trading, as well as requirements that oblige investors to commit for a minimum time period. To the Washington consensus, these are interventions that distort the market's natural rhythms; to the Main Street alternative, they are rules that diminish speculation and encourage productive long-term investment.

There is also nominal agreement on the need to strengthen demand conditions to foster growth, but once again there is fundamental disagreement on the specifics. Thus, whereas the Washington consensus sees export-led growth as a solution to each country's demand problem, the Main Street alternative sees it as a source of competitive devaluation and deflation. In an attempt to gain a competitive advantage on international markets, countries are led to try to lower the value of their currencies relative to those of their rivals. This in turn risks producing a vicious circle of currency crises, as market speculators quickly realize that one country's devaluation renders rival-country currencies over-valued. Indeed, some economists identify the Chinese devaluation of 1994 as the trigger behind east Asia's financial crisis.

EVEN MORE problematic is the tendency of export-led growth strategies to promote global deflation. One country's exports are another country's imports, and this means that all cannot rely on export-led growth. Attempts to do so result in a beggar-thy-neighbor dynamic in which countries seek to export by relying on demand in other countries, thereby generating a global shortage of demand that risks plunging the global economy into a deflationary spiral.

Export-led growth must therefore be replaced with domestic demand-led growth. This is a strategy that lifts all boats, because demand growth in one country pulls in exports from others, so that all grow together.

Achieving domestic demand-led growth in turn requires strengthening domestic demand, and this brings to the fore even deeper divisions between the Washington consensus and the Main Street alternative. Growing domestic demand calls for rising wages to support domestic consumption, and achieving this requires evening the balance of power between capital and labor. For this reason, core labor

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standards that give workers rights of free association allowing them to form unions and bargain collectively are essential. Absent the protections granted by core labor standards, individual workers will face a ceaseless uphill struggle for higher wages, thereby confounding the possibility of shifting to a path of domestic demand-led growth. Whereas the Washington consensus views independent trade unions as a market distortion, the Main Street alternative sees them as the private-sector solution to the imbalance of power created by capital's ability to roam the globe in search of the cheapest, most exploitable workers.

The intelligence and humanity that mark Treasury Secretary Rubin have placed him on record as supporting core labor standards and human rights for ethical reasons, but the problem is that this issue remains peripheral in the Treasury's economic construction of the current crisis. The reality is that it is central. Escaping the trap of export-led growth and making globalization work for all can happen only if the playing field between workers and capital is leveled. This will ensure that the benefits of economic development are shared and that domestic consumption demand can absorb the growth of output.

There is another reason why human rights, labor standards, and strong independent trade unions are vital. The IMF has emphasized the problem of political corruption and economic cronyism that has given rise to misallocation of borrowed resources. It has proposed solving this problem through increased market discipline imposed by increased financial transparency and increased international openness of domestic financial markets. The argument is that market competition will drive out cronyism. This belief is mistaken. The reality is that these behaviors are politically sponsored, and changing them requires political reform. This in turn requires putting in place countervailing forces that can block such behavior. Human and labor rights that give workers the right of free association and confer the ability to organize independent trade unions are the foundation of such reforms. Strong well-functioning democracy is needed to prevent economic cronyism, and unions are an essential ingredient for such an outcome.

Debt relief for developing countries is another measure that can help shift the world economy toward a path of domestic demand-led growth. Debt-service burdens now hinder much of the developing world from following an equitable pro-growth agenda. They also force the third world to focus on export-led growth, which has contributed to deteriorating terms of trade, as well as causing job loss in developed countries. Debt relief is a means out of this box.

What is true for workers also holds for governments. Just as footloose capital is able to threaten workers, so too it is able to threaten governments. As a result of their increased mobility, corporations are increasingly able to win tax exemptions by threatening to move jobs overseas. This has contributed to shifting the tax burden on to working households. The same process threatens to undermine environmental and workplace safety standards. Thus, with business perceiving these measures as a cost, the threat of relocation will be used to get such standards repealed. This is the hallmark of the race to the bottom that has been unleashed by globalization Washington consensus style. For these reasons, the Main Street alternative advocates that international trading agreements incorporate rules that disallow the environment and workplace safety as dimensions of business competition. Also needed are measures that prevent tax competition, whereby governments compete against one another by lowering business tax rates to attract investment.

Finally, it is worth pointing out a third view associated with Jeffrey Sachs, which straddles the debate. Sachs was one of the early architects of Washington consensus "shock" therapy in Eastern Europe, the premise of which was that the old command style economies had to be opened to the bracing wind of the market by rapid privatization and deregulation. However, he has broken with the Washington consensus over East Asia's crisis, and was one of the first to point out that austerity was the wrong response to a bank run.

A key difference between the IMF-Treasury view and Sachs concerns the relationship be-

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tween stabilization and growth. All are for growth. However, the IMF-Treasury view maintains that stabilization must come first, and only then will growth be possible; hence, the inclination to high interest rates and fiscal austerity to placate financial markets. Sachs implicitly argues that stabilization is not possible without growth. Policy makers must therefore focus on jump-starting the world economy through a variety of initiatives, from coordinated interest rate cuts to debt relief and development assistance.

This growth versus stabilization difference is important, but we should not be misled about its ultimate significance. In all other regards Sachs shares the Washington consensus. In particular, he is committed to "fast-track" style free trade, which fosters an international race to the bottom. International wage competition and shifting of jobs in response to cross-country differences in workplace and environmental standards are legitimate dimensions of free trade. At the macroeconomic level, export-led growth, which has countries relying on foreign demand to ensure full employment, is also legitimate. This is so even if exports are achieved through reliance on depreciated currencies. In sum, Sachs may have broken with the Washington consensus over east Asia, but he has not broken with the global economic architecture that the Washington consensus has fostered in the last twenty years.

East Asia's collapse has revealed a clear need to refashion globalization so as to render it stable and share its benefits. The recent spreading of the crisis to Brazil provides further evidence that the existing system is unstable. Brazil's currency devaluation now risks spreading financial contagion to other Latin American countries and China, while its attempt to export its way out of trouble will aggravate the problem of global deflation.

The policies of the Washington consensus have failed. There is now a historic opportunity to break with the Washington consensus and replace it with the new internationalism of the Main Street alternative. Both common sense and economic logic tell us that globalization can work only if there is a level playing field between business and labor, and if economic growth is predicated on expanding domestic markets. This is the only way to ensure equitable growth with full employment. For these reasons it is time to say "Goodbye Washington consensus, hello Main Street alternative." ●

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Gravediggers of Late Capitalism

William Kornblum

BURIED DEEP in the *New York Times* metropolitan section on November 6, 1998, was an article I had been awaiting far too long: "7-Month Labor Dispute Is Over at 8 Jewish Cemeteries in Area." I had been watching one group of sullen gravediggers outside Mt. Hebron Cemetery. They were locked out and miserable. From time to time I stopped my car and got out to chat with them for a few minutes before my class at nearby Queens College. Summer had ended. At Mt. Hebron's gates the men stamped their feet against the cold and breathed jets of coffee steam across their paper cups. Each time I stopped, Sammy Acevedo, their shop steward, had a hopeful word or two with me in front of the men: yes, negotiations were progressing. Soon they would be back to work. This went on for weeks while inside the cemetery foremen buried the dead and scab "replacement workers" clipped the grass around the graves.

But other union workers, especially those in the monument trades, refused to cross the picket lines. All over the region Jewish families were distraught because they could not hold unveilings of gravestones for their loved ones. And for me this labor strife in the city's Jewish necropolis brought back a flood of memories.

The story of the cemetery workers union is filled with larger meanings, political, cultural, and personal. It is a little-known chapter in the region's labor history, for it matters not at all to the GNP whether gravediggers make a living wage or not. But earlier in the century it mattered a great deal to union people throughout the region that their dead were being buried by union workers earning a union wage. One must be of a certain age to remember the cemetery strikes after World War II. They were some of the most hard fought and bitter in this "labor town," even if the dock strikes and the newspaper strikes stand out more clearly in historical memory. In my home the gravediggers were part of the family saga.

In the late 1940s and through much of the 1950s, Daniel Kornblum, my father, was the labor mediator for New York City. He was a labor lawyer, supposedly neutral in the many disputes that rocked the city's economy after the war, but at home he felt free to teach my brother and me about the value of labor unions to society. Collective bargaining was the way out of class exploitation. It was the essential change that would civilize capitalism. Strikes, in his view, were most often a symptom of bad-faith negotiations, usually the result of employer greed or union political intransigence or corruption. Throughout the fifties there were milk strikes, newspaper strikes, tug and longshore strikes, strikes on construction sites, and all of them he took personally as failures of negotiation, his own failures to convince the parties of the need to bargain in good faith. But none of the strikes were as difficult and as personally stressful as the cemetery strikes. These disputes involved the city's religious leaders. They disrupted family life at its most vulnerable moments of crisis. At one moment in my adolescence they involved our own extended family quite directly.

I think it was during the sixth week of the long 1953 cemetery workers strike when my grandmother, my mother's mother, died at the age of eighty-three. My father was not at home much in the days after her death; both sides and the mediators were, as the newspapers like to say, "locked in negotiations." I was fourteen and remember the mood of grief in our home as if it were yesterday. Jewish law demands that

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the dead be buried within twenty four hours after death. One freezing gray day, as the strike and negotiations continued, uncles Lester and Izzie, burly iron workers, dug their mother's grave and lowered her pine coffin to the earth at Mt. Hebron cemetery on the Brooklyn and Queens border. They had not crossed the picket lines. An arrangement was made for them to enter the cemetery by a side entrance. Even so, my dad seemed especially tormented. He railed against the stubbornness of the rabbis who were holding out in the negotiations. He gave us a word-for-word account of his efforts to have them accept the settlement that the powerful Catholic cemetery corporation had already agreed to. I am sure my father's anguish was the result of his failure to settle a strike that had taken on such deep personal meaning for all of us.

Many years later, shortly after my father's death, I joined the Board of Herman Benson's Association for Union Democracy, where I was introduced to attorney John Harold, a veteran of the same period of labor struggles. John had been the lawyer for the cemetery workers since the late 1940s. When he met me and learned that Daniel was my father, tears came to his eyes. He had a story for me, he said, one that he and Sam Cimaglie, the union's founder and then-president, told about the terrible 1953 strike. It was about how my father had berated the rabbis, something only another Jew could have done in that situation. As John told it, with his Irish love of a good yarn, the story was one of those wonderful episodes of New York ethnic labor politics. But when I told John the family side, which he did not know, his eyes moistened again and he made me promise that I would someday tell Sam Cimaglie this part of the tale.

A number of years ago, before the most recent episode of labor strife over the graveyards, I did go to visit the cemetery workers' union founding president. Sam Cimaglie was still president at the time, but his health was declining and he was looking forward to retirement. (He watched the 1998 lockout from the sidelines, but his leadership is still vivid in the memories of union veterans.) His Cemetery Workers Local 365 of the Service Employees International Union had recently been merged into the larger SEIU Local 74. But for our interview Sam met me at the union's old headquarters in Ridgewood, Queens. Ridgewood's thriving commercial district reminds one of the downtown in any major Midwestern industrial city. There are no signs of gentrification, but plenty of signs, in the people on the streets and in the shops, of the old and new immigrations. When we met that day, Sam's wife, Tina, was helping out at the local. There were two small strikes in process, and a mailing of a new contract for the workers to ratify in all the other cemeteries. Sam greeted me warmly as I entered. A tall man with plenty of gray hair and a trim physique, but slightly wary in his motions, betraying his recent illness, he extended his hand and a broad smile. "You can only be one person," he laughed as we sat down.

I REVIEWED very quickly what my project was about, but it wasn't necessary. Sam knew I had a story to tell him. He listened to my brief tale and was touched by its ironies. But he had heard many stories about families burying their loved ones during cemetery strikes. And so we quickly moved on to the broader subject of my visit: Why, I wondered, have the city's vast and seemingly peaceful cemeteries been such a contested terrain of labor strife over the years?

"First thing to understand, Bill, is that the cemeteries are run by religious corporations. These are Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish corporations that are nonprofit. According to the law they don't even have to recognize unions. The others are nonreligious not-for-profit corporations." Before the 1940s, Sam explained, "they were all robbing the families blind, it was terrible, a shame. There was no control of them." By mid-century the courts and the state intervened to form more publicly accountable trusts and a state cemetery board that controls the nonsectarian cemeteries. The religious cemeteries, which form the majority, are still run by the religious corporations.

When he returned from World War II, Sam went to work at Calvary Cemetery. "We were fifty guys, mostly returned vets and we first looked for a union. There were about 350

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working at Calvary then and we averaged sixty burials a day. It could easily go as high as 120 in the summer or the winter. The extreme heat or cold, people go then, it affects their respiration."

The union started in 1937 at Greenwood in Brooklyn, one of the city's oldest and most beautiful cemeteries, the permanent home of luminaries like DeWitt Clinton, Samuel Morse, the Tiffanys, Henry George, Boss Tweed, Margaret Sanger, Henry Ward Beecher, George Tilyou (one of my favorites, creator of the Steeplechase amusement park at Coney Island), and many, many others. But as Sam explained, for quite a while the union remained small and weak with "just a handful of men before the war."

Through the forties the cemeteries expanded and so did the union, which in 1949 signed its first national charter, with the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). "We were the first cemetery workers' union in the U.S. But the CIO put us in the Agricultural and Tobacco Workers Union. This was a communist union, but they didn't put us there because of that. It was not political, it was because of the kind of work we did." It was a move that added immeasurably to the opposition that greeted the largely Catholic cemetery workers in the coming years. As Sam describes this period,

> the 1949 strike, that was the first real test. We had five thousand bodies piled up. I was on the union committee then. We were in the seventh week of the strike and the labor movement in the city was shunning us. You've got to remember, Bill, that we were fighting "The Powerhouse." That's what the New York Archdiocese was called. I mean the cardinal, Spellman himself. Our guys were getting completely cut off. Even their electricity. We were supposed to be a communist dominated union. In the seventh week of the strike all the men but the committee got a telegram from the diocese inviting them all to a meeting. Not the committee. We could not go. The men were angry about this and wanted to stay away. The other lawyer who helped us when John Harold was away, he said "Don't stay away, but pick somebody to be a spokesman and at the meeting ask the cardinal to meet with the committee. If he says no, then you walk."
>
> The meeting was held at Cathedral High School, in the auditorium. All the men came and showed their telegrams at the door. The union committee had none to show and were kept out. My brother was in there. Frank McClosky got up to speak. "Your eminence," he said, "What about our committee? They are outside." The cardinal says, "No, they are communists. They are fired." Frank says, "They're not communists. They are all GIs." At that, all the guys get up to leave.
>
> The cardinal was wearing his long robes. But when he saw the men get up he lost his composure. He came running down the auditorium after them to try to get them to stay. He was shouting that our per-capita tax was going to the Communist Party. The cardinal said if you go back to your seats I will go meet with the committee. The men returned to their seats and the cardinal met with the committee.

Sam explained that he told the cardinal he was being hypocritical. The leadership had already said they would seek to affiliate with another union if there was a wage offer they could live with. After agreeing to further negotiations the cardinal led the committee into the meeting. "During the meeting he kept saying he loved us all. 'Don't show us that kind of love no more,' my brother said."

STRIKE TALKS faltered and to make matters worse the cardinal sent seminarians out to bury bodies in the Catholic cemeteries. "But we knew it was just for show," Sam laughed, "They couldn't really do it." In the meantime the gravediggers and their families were starving. "And to make it worse at the same time the trial of the ten communists in Judge Medina's court was going on. The head of the International Cemetery Workers Union was out in front of the court every day picketing and raising money for the defense. Imagine how that looked for us in the papers. We were just getting buried deeper and deeper. We would go around to other unions and not raise a dime in support."

> We also held our first general membership meeting, not just of the striking cemeteries. In those days all the cemetery contracts ex-

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pired at different times. At the meeting we voted to disaffiliate. The CIO sent Louis Haywood to meet with us, to have us go in with the Steelworkers. The Teamsters also approached us. But neither of them would offer us a charter. We wanted to be our own local, which they were not offering. So the AFL offered us a charter with the old Building Service Employees International Union, with our own charter. And then we got really lucky. David Sullivan, BSEIU Vice President, got Hugh Sheridan as impartial chairman. . . . He'd been a founding member of Local 807 of the Teamsters and then became a trucking owner, Duncan Sheridan Trucking Lines. He . . . knew how both sides operate and think.

When the grueling 1949 cemetery strike was finally settled, the men won a forty-hour week and a $6-a-week raise. At that time, Sam remembers, "we were barely hanging on. It was terrible. Hugh Sheridan and Dave Sullivan . . . set up a meeting again with the cardinal. As soon as the meeting started, Hugh Sheridan said, 'Your Eminence, you need to get rid of those cemetery trustees. They are old fogies.' Everyone was shocked. But Hugh just went on telling the cardinal what he thought. He said we should get a forty-hour week and a $6-a-week raise in pay. Then he said, 'Your Eminence, these men have been out for many weeks now. Out of Christian charity I think you should give them a week's pay when they return to work.' And Cardinal Spellman did that. Hugh Sheridan, what a human being."

At mid-century there were nine cemeteries organized in the union: Greenwood and Holy Cross St. John, Calvary (the Catholic cemeteries), Union Field, Mt. Judah, and Mt. Hebron (Jewish); Lutheran and Evergreen (nonsectarian); and St. Michael (Protestant). Sam Cimaglie's local had 1,200 members in these, all of them in the city. The work was all done by hand. They shoveled the graves, used hand mowers and even scythes. "You had about 350 workers in the average big cemetery, not including seasonal people." Today, with larger machines to dig graves there are about 350 full-time workers in all eight of the Jewish cemeteries where the strike recently ended. "And in those days we had one full-time union official. All our union business was carried on after work hours or on released time." By 1953 Sam went on the union payroll as a full timer. " Then we started to organize new areas and to spread out. By 1967 we had forty-seven cemeteries but the membership had only grown to 1,700 because of automation, especially the earth-moving equipment." Each time the union attempted to organize in a new cemetery or a different part of the metropolitan region, it faced bitter resistance and prolonged strikes.

You know these strikes were always terrible. I always pray to keep the men together. The wives call and give it to me all the time. Everybody has my home number.

The Newark strike in 1973, when we were trying to get a first contract for Holy Cross Cemetery of the New Jersey Archdiocese was maybe the worst of them all. Archbishop Boland out there had hired a union-busting firm (Lewis and Jackson). We had no NLRB rights, but we won the election and were trying to get them to give us a contract. It was in the courts. They would give us everything we had elsewhere but the union shop . . . . They had scabs doing the work. No one cared about the picketing.

Some men in the union came to me. "Sam," they say, "We've got to kill these two scab leaders in the cemetery. They are killing us. They are taking the bread from our children's mouths. C'mon Sam, give us $10,000 for a contract."

Tears were flooding Sam's eyes as he told me this story. I knew the gravediggers' union had a stormy history, but I was unaware that its difficulties had lasted for so long. And I was reminded again of how many union struggles go largely unnoticed and yet how momentous the moral issues can become for the people involved. The Newark strike "was turning good, hard-working people into animals." Union members were actually asking Sam to consider murder.

As God is my judge, when I was driving home that evening I called out, "God, what do I do? What do I do?" Then inside me I heard a voice which was not my voice. "Do what Gandhi did," it says. I realized God was telling me to go on a hunger strike. "But Lord look at me," I

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said, "I can hardly wait to get home to eat now. I'll bring disgrace on you and all of us if we fail." "You will not fail, Sam," says the Voice.

The next day I went to the Cathedral and for fourteen days I was on a hunger strike. Archbishop Boland was out to break us and I thought I was dying. I had a history of heart trouble and it didn't take me too long without eating to think my heart was going. I was taken to the hospital and placed in an intensive care unit. Then Tom Donahue, the assistant to George Meany, president of the AFL-CIO calls: "Sam, I witnessed a miracle today. I went in to see George with his mail and a copy of the *Washington Post*. The paper had a photo of you praying and fasting. George sees it and says, 'Tom, this is a disgrace. We are going to see Cardinal Juido, the emissary to the pope here in Washington.' Sure enough the cardinal wires the pope with the whole story and the pope pulls Boland and appoints Monseigneur Gerrity as New Jersey archbishop in his place. The next day Bishop Gerrity pulls up to the cemetery in a little Volkswagen and says, "Tell the men to go back to work. You have a union shop." Ten dissidents who crossed over and scabbed were kept in the union. We wound up after that with seven cemeteries in Northern New Jersey.

That same year there were many other violent strikes in the region's cemeteries. The union was staunchly resisting new legislative requirements that it accept compulsory arbitration of labor disputes. "I went to jail for a while." Sam explained, "because we wouldn't go to arbitration under the Emergency Burial Act. But then I made a complete reversal on the arbitration issue." The constant scenes of family anguish became too much for him and other union leaders:

> One day, Bill, as the Good Lord is my judge, I saw something that made me think it all over again.
>
> We were outside Mt. Hebron again, picketing. The teamsters who drive the hearses were honoring the picket lines. So they would leave the body at the gate of the cemetery, and of course none of us would bring them in. Well this hearse pulls up with a plain pine coffin, a small one. They set it down at the gates. It's winter, hardly anyone is around. Then I see a little old man and a small boy, a kid, eight or nine years old. I see this in front of my eyes now, whenever I think about this. I can't help crying. The old man is wringing his hands and saying "What will we do? What will we do? We've got to bury grandma." And the little boy puts his arm around him and says, "Don't cry grandpa. The two of us can carry her inside." Well of course I waved to the men and we carried her in so fast . . . but when you see that kind of thing over and over and it makes you think there's got to be other ways of settling these things.

As my interview that day almost ten years ago came to an end, Cimaglie was in an upbeat mood about the future of his union. He felt there was finally an acceptance of unions among the religious corporations, and especially at the powerful Catholic cemeteries. That acceptance of the rules and benefits of collective bargaining seemed to promise an end to the worst episodes of labor strife.

As I watched the lack of progress after seven months of lockout and picketing at Mt. Hebron this past year, I wondered what had happened. Jack Ryan, president of Local 74 of the SEIU, which represents the cemetery workers as part of a larger amalgamated union local, was pleased to announce that at Mt. Hebron the 120 gravediggers and groundskeepers would be called back immediately. They had won a raise of $23 a week, bringing their weekly wages that much over $700. But over seven months of lockout there had been violence reminiscent of the bad old days. Fights between union men and scabs brought injuries to both sides. Five union members were arrested in scuffles outside the cemetery gates. One of the so-called temporary replacement workers was stabbed, although not critically. Two of the locked-out union men were injured severely.

The old-pattern bargaining system in which the Catholic cemeteries led the negotiations seems to have crumbled. The eight Jewish cemeteries attempted to get an agreement more favorable to their needs. They hired scabs and stuck to a hard line in the bargaining that kept the union workers locked outside their gates for seven long months.

With so many unskilled hands available in

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the city it must be tempting for the religious corporations to try to lower their labor costs. But in the end the Cemetery Employer Association of Greater New York, and the Jewish cemetery managements they represent, did concede to many of the union's demands. Of course in the papers the employers say that "both sides came away with things they needed." But was it worth it? Thanks to their union and to their own solidarity, the gravediggers are still making a living wage. But at Mt. Hebron and elsewhere they will hardly make up what they lost during the strike over the length of the contract. And soon enough contracts will expire and there will be more bargaining. Perhaps the cemetery corporations have re-learned the lessons that Sam Cimiglie and his adversaries learned earlier in the century about the benefits of collective bargaining and sustained labor peace. But in today's labor-management environment, with weakened public support for unions and emboldened bosses, one wonders if labor peace will ever finally settle on the graveyards.

THE ANSWER to that question hinges to a large degree on the future of unions and collective bargaining in the city and the nation. When my father took his place as a "permanent New Yorker" in the family plot at Mt. Carmel along the Interboro Parkway (now the Jackie Robinson) which winds through the necropolis of Brooklyn and Queens, Ronald Reagan had not yet been elected president. Unlike Cimaglie and the burial workers, my father was spared the war on unions and on the labor laws he had helped to create. Like many of his generation, my father went to his grave convinced that the worst of the anti-union days were over. Labor-management conflict was encapsulated, to use Daniel Bell's apt term, in a structure of laws and procedures like arbitration and collective bargaining that would never guarantee complete labor peace, but would at least bring routine class conflict under the rule of law. When President Reagan fired the Air Traffic Controllers, we the living witnessed the dissolution of the post-World War II labor-management compact our parents had fought for.

The locked-out cemetery workers at the gates of a Jewish cemetery near Queens College were a reminder to me of the continuing and vital importance of labor unions in the lives of working people. A minority of my students at the college was far less convinced. They argued with somewhat arrogant naivete that $700 a week was an excessive wage for relatively unskilled workers. If the cemetery corporations could find labor "in the free market" at a lower rate they should be allowed to do so. Others were equally convinced that all workers should earn a "decent wage." Collective bargaining agreements were necessary, if not sufficient, they reasoned, to ensure that this would be possible. Too many students, however, voiced no opinion at all on the issues and seemed never to have given them much thought.

The ethnic, racial backgrounds of my students at Queens College are strikingly similar to those of the cemetery workers who stood in the cold not far from the college gates. The economic security of many of their recent-immigrant parents, and, less directly, even the future of the public university they attend, depend on the success of workers' efforts to gain union recognition and bargain collectively. From cradle to grave, I tried to show my students, a "service economy" requires unions as much as one dominated by manufacturing does. We are all better off—so they might learn from the gravediggers' example, if the people who care for our needs have strong, democratic unions with dedicated and modestly heroic leaders like Sam Cimaglie. ●

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Psychoanalysis and Democracy

Joel Whitebook

THE EXHIBITION *Freud: Conflict and Culture* opened at the Library of Congress last October after several years of highly publicized controversy and one postponement. Not since King Tut came to New York's Metropolitan Museum in the early seventies has an exhibition caused so much commotion. But given the subject matter, the cast of characters, and our sensation-hungry press, this couldn't have been otherwise.

Here are the facts. In June 1994, the Library of Congress, which has the largest collection of Freud manuscripts in the world, announced it was planning a major exhibition on Freud in May 1996. Such an exhibit hadn't been feasible before because many of the papers could not be used owing to legal restrictions concerning patient-doctor confidentiality. The exhibition was possible now because of an arrangement that allowed access to many documents that had formerly been sealed.

The opposition launched its attack on July 31, 1995 in the form of a letter to officials of the Library, which expressed the seemingly reasonable concern that the exhibition "should suitably portray the present status of knowledge and adequately reflect the full spectrum of informed opinion about the status of Freud's contribution to intellectual history." The forty-two signatories identified themselves as scholars who had made significant contributions to Freud studies, and who worked "independently of one another," sharing "no common doctrinal commitment or institutional affiliation." A number of the signers—including Mikkel Borch-Jacobson, Frank Cioffi, Frederick Crews, Adolf Grünbaum, Frank Sulloway, and Peter Swales—have come to be identified either as the leading "Freud bashers" or as the foremost "revisionist theorists of psychoanalysis," depending on whom you talk to. The moving force behind the petition was Swales, a controversial independent historian of early psychoanalysis, who contended that the exhibit was nothing more than a trade show on the part of the psychoanalytic establishment designed to polish up its badly tarnished public image. He argued, moreover, that taxpayers' dollars should not be used to fund an enterprise that was necessarily unscientific and biased. Nor should it receive the intellectual imprimatur of the Library of Congress, one of the most prestigious cultural institutions in the United States. He explained, "It was as though the Library of Congress were to enlist R. J. Reynolds and Company to organize a show on the history of tobacco."

Each side made its case in terms of freedom of speech. The petitioners argued that the exhibition, as it was constituted, did not give the whole range of opinion about the Freudian project and therefore could be seen as an attempt to silence the opposition. The defenders, on the other hand, decried the petition itself as an attempt at prior restraint in the culture wars. The ruckus about the Freud show followed closely on the heels of two other embarrassing controversies concerning federally funded exhibitions—*Against Hitler: German Resistance to National Socialism, 1933-1945*, which was exposed as a propaganda exercise funded by Germany, and the Enola Gay exhibit, which encountered intense opposition from veterans' groups. And it was taking place at a time when major cultural institutions were being hit by budget cuts. The Library decided to play it safe: to postpone, not cancel, the exhibit, supposedly because of a shortfall in fund-raising—a claim that has generally been met with skepticism.

The organizers insisted that they hadn't changed their approach to the exhibit as a re-

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sult of the controversy, though several of them admitted that it prompted them to sharpen their thinking and take more care with the presentations. The critics rejected as tokenism an invitation to participate on a panel or to present their views in a video presentation as part of the show. But three of them did finally contribute to the volume that was published in conjunction with the show. And one of the original letter signers—Morris Eagle, then president of the largest organization of psychologist-psychoanalysts in the country—was added to the advisory committee.

Perpetual Crisis

Everyone I talked to insisted that the Freud exhibition—which moves to New York's Jewish Museum this spring—wasn't intended to commemorate any anniversary having to do with Freud or psychoanalysis. Yet it could well have been a commemorative occasion. For the years 1995 to 2000 contain the centennial anniversaries of all the important events in the creation of psychoanalysis, beginning with the publication of *Studies in Hysteria* (1895) and culminating with the *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). In any case, there is little disagreement that *Conflict and Culture* is occurring at a time when the profession of psychoanalysis is suffering from a deep crisis, especially in the United States, not only in the eyes of the general public, but in the perceptions of the analysts themselves.

To be sure, psychoanalysis has been in crisis since it was born. Many of the criticisms—concerning its scientific validity, therapeutic effectiveness, and treatment of women and gays—are not new. Nevertheless, because of a new constellation of cultural and socio-economic factors, there is a sense that this time the situation may be more serious, indeed even hopeless.

Perhaps the most obvious *practical* reason for the crisis of psychoanalysis has to do with what might be called its "market share." Since its glory days in the 1950s, when psychoanalysts dominated psychiatry departments around the country, there has been an enormous proliferation of alternative forms of psychotherapy—many of them spawned by analysis itself. These alternative therapies generally claim to be less expensive and arduous as well as more effective. The explosion in the use of psychotropic medication over the last decade has also changed the landscape dramatically—not only as a competitor to psychoanalysis, but to the talking therapies in general. An additional factor is the new policies of the insurance companies and Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs)—themselves part of the brutal rationalization of capitalist economies that has occurred over the last couple of decades. Most insurance companies will only reimburse patients for a small number of sessions, and many policies explicitly exclude any sort of "insight-oriented" treatment. An approach that is exclusively concerned with the bottom line will of necessity force patients into short-term (often behavioral) therapy or medication because these are much less expensive and supposedly more efficient than psychoanalytically oriented treatment.

In addition to these practical factors, there are larger cultural forces working against analysis. The changes brought about by the Reagan revolution and the new deregulated capitalism are, to put it mildly, not conducive to self-reflection. After the intermezzo of the sixties, outward-directed values, that is, moneymaking and the pursuit of status and celebrity, have been largely reinstated as the highest goods. Even those individuals who don't accept them are forced to work many more hours because of the reorganization of the economy. Indeed, our whole sense of time is in the process of being accelerated and transformed. It isn't just that we don't have the leisure to pause and reflect because of the intensified pressures of making a living. The introduction of faxes, e-mail, cellular phones, and CNN have sped things up to the point where we live in a world where everything is experienced as happening simultaneously. There is no longer the time between one event and another that is necessary for the intellectual and psychological working over of experience.

Besides sensationalistic journalism, the postponement of the exhibit also generated some serious discussion. For it touched on many of the central issues confronting our public life. It highlighted traditional questions about free speech and prior restraint that were

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addressed in articles by Anthony Lewis, Todd Gitlin, and Paul Goldberger: Is a show funded by federal money obliged to present all points of view? Does a militant and well-organized group have the right to block an exhibit because they think its views are pernicious? Are our cultural institutions becoming too timid in the face of repeated attacks (often coming from the right)?

But the exhibit also raised more vexing issues arising out of postmodernism, multiculturalism, and the memory wars—similar to those debated in Europe over how the Holocaust should be memorialized. Given the fact that there is no longer a solid consensus about the core constituents of our collective identity and the widespread skepticism over notions of truth and objectivity, who should have the power to decide how our history is going to be officially recorded? I interviewed Irene Chambers, the Library's director of interpretive programs, a sincere, self-described "museum professional," who is as puzzled by the proliferation of postmodern thought as she is perplexed by the politicization of her field. At one point in our extended discussion she asked me: "Why isn't it possible to just have an 'objective' exhibit?"

Both the memory wars in Europe and the Freud wars here evoke so much passion because both conflicts bear on our fundamental image of ourselves. The debate over how to memorialize the Holocaust is not only about the behavior of certain individuals or countries during the Second World War and the way they should be remembered. It also raises questions concerning the tenuousness of human solidarity and the fact of human destructiveness. The public generally doesn't like its institutions to remind them of such issues.

The Freud wars are perhaps even more directly a fight about human nature. Unlike other species, whose natures are rigidly determined by their instinctual wiring, humans are, to a significant degree, defined by their representations of themselves. If our core self-representations are radically transformed, it is not going too far to say that what we are is altered at the same time. Correctly or incorrectly, this is what Freud did. By demonstrating the depth, scope, and power of unconscious mental processes and the ubiquity of transference in all human relations, he fundamentally transformed the received view of human nature. In doing this, he also changed what we are in some important sense.

After the dust settled and the exhibition had been rescheduled, this is the "minimal" point the organizers agreed on. Whether or not you like it—indeed, whether or not you can say exactly what it consists in—it is hard to deny "the fact of Freud," that is, the massive transformation he effected in what it means to be a human being in the twentieth century. It is precisely this fact that the critics want to dislodge. As Jonathan Lear put it, "Freud is just a stalking horse . . . . The real object of attack . . . is the very idea that humans have unconscious motivation."

One of the best things to come out of the whole episode was the emergence of Jonathan Lear, a philosopher as well as a psychoanalyst, as a highly effective spokesperson for the psychoanalytic position. To be sure, after the *New York Review of Books* published an article by Frederick Crews—the Kenneth Starr of Freud criticism—praising a number of second-rate books that were highly critical of Freud, the analytic camp sent off a barrage of letters. The points they made were, for the most part, only passable. None of them seemed up to stopping the momentum of the anti-Freudians. The very fact that the analysts had such difficulty defending themselves could be seen as symptomatic of the crisis of the profession.

Finally, when Lear's "The Shrink Is In" appeared in the *New Republic* in December of 1995, "there was," as Janet Malcolm observed, "an almost audible sigh of relief among those who had found the attacks preposterous, but had figured out no way to answer them." Indeed, the article was such a relief that copies of it were distributed at the fall meetings of the American Psychoanalytic Association.

According to Lear's diagnosis, "obsessing about Freud the *man* is a way of keeping Freud *the meaning* at bay." And what is that meaning? By demonstrating the existence of infantile sexuality, the depth of unconscious mental processes, and the pervasiveness of bisexuality, Freud destroyed the consoling myths that

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children are innocent, that humans are essentially rational animals, and that sexual identity is an unambiguous matter. In other words, behind much of the research into the minutiae and sometimes unappealing sides of Freud's life, behind the attempt to discredit him personally, his detractors seek to invalidate his claim that human beings are "complex psychological organisms that generate layers of meaning which lie beneath the surface of their understanding."

When I pressed Swales—who has gone to considerable lengths to prove that Freud had an affair with his sister-in-law—on the question, he adamantly denied the existence of a psychoanalytic unconscious. "An unconscious, in the Freudian sense," he argued, "has no real existence, but is actually induced by the psychoanalytic séance." Like another well-known critic of psychoanalysis, Michel Foucault, Swales claims, in short, that the unconscious is an "iatrogenic" phenomenon.

Similarly, the almost exclusive focus on Freud's early formulations and *Case Histories* by the "revisionist" historians and philosophers of science is also guided by an odd assumption: to invalidate this work would undermine the credibility of *current* psychoanalytic theory and practice. But this approach ignores the simple fact that not only the field as a whole but Freud himself progressed far beyond its necessarily primitive beginnings. Robert Olds, a New York analyst, likened Freud's situation to that of a physician who had to perform the first appendectomy on himself, using a mirror and without anesthesia.

Like the Freud bashers, many analysts themselves have made a direct, if tacit, equation between the man and his work. They also assume that any disparagement of Freud's personality or discrediting of his early theories and techniques poses a threat to the legitimacy of psychoanalysis as a whole. This is one of the reasons there is such a strong compulsion in the field to idealize Freud and shield his work from criticism—an exercise that has tended at times to give psychoanalysis the aura of a religious sect. Because the true believers and the radical debunkers are, in this sense, mirror opposites of each other, their "debate" is ultimately sterile.

When psychoanalysts maintain their commitment to analysis through an idealization of Freud or defend their ideas—or any ideas, for that matter—dogmatically, they are not consistent with their own principles. As the late psychoanalyst and social theorist Cornelius Castoriadis argued, psychoanalysis represents a major chapter in "the project of autonomy," which he sees as the right "to put into question" all existing beliefs and values and which he sees as one of the two fundamental and largely antagonistic projects that define modern democratic-capitalist societies.

This "project of autonomy" emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with the democratic and secular fight against absolutism and religion. It has been carried forward by all the emancipatory struggles of modernity: the workers', civil rights, student, women's, and gay and lesbian movements, and the anti-communist movements in the Soviet bloc—as well as by the aesthetic avant-garde. Once this project is established, no "representations of the tribe" can be immune from criticism, even if mythical ancestors, God, natural law, or historical necessity supposedly sanction them. Indeed, these extra-human sanctions are themselves no longer recognized as legitimate. "As honest smallholders on this earth," as Freud put it, women and men must autonomously determine the fundamental principles for ordering their lives without any theological or metaphysical supports. This is one of the deepest meanings of democracy.

Cornelius Castoriadis—whose work is beginning to get the attention it deserves in this country—calls the other main tendency of modern societies "the project of the unlimited expansion of 'rational' mastery." This historical undertaking, which also began in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, involves the amalgamation of the newly liberated capitalist economy with technical rationality. Where the capitalist market provides the dynamic motor for potentially unlimited expansion, modern quantifying science provides a form of rationalization that is progressively imposed on all realms of existence. Once this omnipotent "project of mastery" is set in motion, everything—physical and human nature,

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tradition and other values—becomes grist for its mill and is subjected to the maximization of efficiency, productivity, and profit. Castoriadis attributes the rise of Marxism-Leninism to the fact that the workers movement didn't sufficiently understand itself in terms of autonomy and democracy, but bought into "the project of mastery." The result was that "capitalism, liberalism, and the classical revolutionary movement" all came to share the belief that technical mastery alone held the key to human emancipation and well being. In the most general terms, the current political situation in the democratic capitalist world is defined by the contest between these two projects.

Theoretically, psychoanalysis belongs to the "project of autonomy" because of the immense expansion of the topics it "put into question." No subject can be tabooed—by priests, mullahs, rabbis, party functionaries, or training analysts. In principle everything is open to uncensored examination. Castoriadis notes that like Plato, Freud's achievement has been to pursue the meaning of human existence in a methodically radical way, even when it affronts our collective self-esteem. At its best, psychoanalysis continues to pursue a process of open-ended interrogation, which, among other things, questions the cherished assumptions of psychoanalysis itself.

Both Castoriadis and Lear see omnipotence as the major psychological obstacle to democracy. And they both turn to *Totem and Taboo*, generally thought to be Freud's most reactionary work, to make their point. Psychoanalytic conservatives have usually used the book's myth of the primal horde to argue for the necessity of an authoritarian social order and the futility of revolt. They tend to focus on the act of patricide and ignore the pact between the brothers, with its potentially democratic message. Castoriadis and Lear, however, stress the latter as a way to bring out the connection between democracy and the renunciation of omnipotence. After the primal father—who had the right to possess sexually all the women and to freely murder his adversaries—has been removed and the pact established, *no one can re-occupy the vacated position of omnipotence*. The other brothers will put whoever tries in his place. Henceforth, de-centered and equal "citizens" must resolve all conflicts and decisions through negotiation. Indeed, the "citizenry" itself must determine the rules that govern those negotiations.

Although it is naïve to think that one can directly derive a democratic program—or any political program—from psychoanalysis, we can say that the totalitarian temptation consists in the impulse to reassert omnipotence on an individual or collective level. And psychoanalysis explicitly teaches the dangers of omnipotence, thus tempering our grandiosity by engendering "a certain humility," as Lear puts it, in the face of the irrational. Because of this, "psychoanalysis is crucial for a truly democratic culture to thrive."

Psychoanalysis shares an appreciation of the irrational with certain contemporary critics of the Enlightenment. However, where those critics often "pour scorn on the democratic ideal," analysis does not. Due to his unique synthesis of Enlightenment and Romantic thinking, Freud suggests a way, in Lear's words, to "take irrationality seriously and participate in the democratic ideal." Indeed, through its active engagement and working through of the irrational, psychoanalysis could even help to formulate a deeper vision of democracy. As W. H. Auden noted in his often-quoted memorial to Freud, the "creatures" of the night can "serve enlightenment" too. This in turn might help to overcome the limitations of both the postmodern rejection of the democratic ideal and the liberal defense of it in purely procedural terms.

DESPITE THE use of the term "psychoanalytic technique," psychoanalysis is not a technological enterprise. In other clinical approaches, therapists have preconceived ideas of psychic health that they try to realize in their patients through their expertise; the patient is basically the passive recipient of the therapist's ministrations. The aim of psychoanalysis, in contrast, is to maximize the patient's potential for autonomy. Contrary to recent criticisms of classical analysis as "one-person psychology," the pursuit of this aim requires the activity of both partners working together to maximize one partner's autonomy and

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activity, rather than the therapist's ministrations to a passive patient. The analyst's "impossible" skill—like the good teacher's—consists, as Castoriadis notes, in his or her ability to "develop the self-activity of the subject by using, so to speak, this very self-activity."

Lear was able to undercut the Freud critics' position so effectively because he made no bones about it: psychoanalysis is "the first therapy that sets *freedom* rather than some specific image of human *happiness* as its goal." The point of analysis is to help patients develop sufficient autonomy to determine their own version of happiness. This requires, as the late psychoanalytic theorist Hans Loewald observed, "an objectivity and neutrality the essence of which is love and respect for the individual and individual development."

Unfortunately, many analysts accept the criteria of the National Institute for Mental Health and the insurance companies and try to argue that analysis is as effective as other forms of psychotherapy or medication. The mental health bureaucracies are not, however, interested in autonomy but in efficiency and the bottom line. The pursuit of autonomy is a very inefficient and unprofitable undertaking. As Lear points out, "it's a mistake to think that psychoanalysis and Prozac are two different means to the same end." By accepting these criteria, analysts give up "the project of autonomy" and move over to "the project of mastery." Indeed, the creation of psychotropic drugs—which undeniably have their place in the immediate reduction of pain—marks a major step forward in the conquest of human nature. Unless the analysts aggressively challenge the presuppositions of the bureaucrats they will not only lose the fight, but their souls as well.

THE CURRENT hostility toward psychoanalysis is not only the result of external factors. The Freudian establishment in America has done a lot to stir up negative transferences. The early European analysts were, as Freud's daughter, Anna, observed, "the unconventional ones, the doubters, those who were dissatisfied with the limitations imposed on knowledge, the odd ones, the dreamers, and those who knew neurotic suffering from their own experience." However, the transplantation of psychoanalysis from Europe to the United States caused the mutation of a new subspecies of *Homo psychoanalyticus*. By the fifties and sixties, with the medicalization and normalization of the profession in this country, the prestige of the profession was at its height. At that point, "the sober, well-prepared ones" took over, the ones "who are hard-working enough to wish to better their professional efficiency." The analysts had, to use Freud's famous phrase, succeeded in joining "the compact majority—a group the founder of psychoanalysis never wanted to belong to.

Since the schizoidal and uptight analyst of the fifties and sixties has often been caricatured in popular culture, and the conservatism of postwar psychoanalysis criticized by others, I won't go into that here. Yet I do want to make one point: that this particular form of psychoanalysis was too rigid to respond to the cultural transformations taking place. The current crisis is, in no small part, a result of that failure. With the anti-authoritarian turn of the sixties, the authoritarianism, arrogance and insularity that characterized much of American psychoanalysis would no longer wash—either with psychoanalytic candidates, patients, or the public. By the time organized psychoanalysis woke up to this fact, it had lost much of its prestige.

The antipositivist movements that followed the publication of Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolution* in 1962 also caused psychoanalysis to lose much of its legitimacy as a science. As Carl Schorske, one of the organizers of the Freud exhibit, has pointed out, a certain "rigorism" has pervaded American intellectual life since the Second World War. Everyone envied the successes of the natural sciences. Although Freud's writings on methodology are complicated and maybe even contradictory—combining both interpretive and positivist tendencies—American analysts, for the most part, jumped on the bandwagon and accepted only the positivist strand, attempting to defend analysis as a strict science. (They also wanted to prove to their medical colleagues that they were scientifically kosher.) That this approach was destined to fail became apparent in 1958 at a famous sym-

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posium on psychoanalysis and scientific method that Sidney Hook organized at New York University in which the analysts proved unable to defend themselves against the hard-nosed philosophers of science.

Revisions

The rise of the women's movement—and, following that, of the gay and lesbian movements—was the biggest single challenge to psychoanalysis and perhaps the critical development that sent its stock plummeting. Freud's attitude toward female psychology and sexuality is full of contradictions. It is no longer controversial to say that his psychology of women is probably the area of his thinking most contaminated by conventional prejudices. By setting himself the radical task of examining sexuality "scientifically," which is to say, without social prejudices, he broke with the Victorian culture of his day and opened the way for the emancipatory sexual movements of this century. As a nineteenth-century paterfamilias, however, he was unable to live up to the task he had set himself.

Despite the howlers about women, he set in motion a process that others have carried far beyond his own shaky efforts. (One could even argue that contemporary feminism is partly a result of that process.) Indeed, the last twenty years have witnessed a new and fertile interchange between psychoanalysis and feminism. Largely as a result of the feminist challenge, female psychology has become a wide-open and hotly debated topic even within mainstream Freudian psychoanalysis. And while ideological potshots are still fired in Freud's direction, some of the most important feminist theorists—most notably, Jessica Benjamin, Nancy Chodorow, and Elisabeth Young-Breuhl—are practicing psychoanalysts.

Until recently, the treatment of homosexuals within the American Psychoanalytic Association was a grim story. As professional colleagues, they were treated as pariahs and barred from mainstream training institutes because of their supposed "character disorders"; as patients, their sexual orientation was pathologized. Again, conflicting viewpoints can be found within Freud's thinking on the subject. On the one side, there is his famous letter to the worried mother of a homosexual man that was remarkably advanced and enlightened for its time. He told her that there was no disadvantage to being a homosexual and that many of the great men in history had been gay. However, his theory of psychosexual development, which culminates in what is called a (heterosexual) genital phase, could be used to justify a "normalizing" approach. With it, developmental theory could be turned into an instrument of conventional morality. Until recently, this is exactly what the American Psychoanalytic Association did. For years, homosexuals' sexual preferences were seen as a problem to be cured. However, the organization officially renounced discrimination against homosexuals in 1992 and has gone a remarkably long way to acknowledge and correct its former mistakes. As with the question of female psychology, the psychoanalytic meaning of homosexuality is now the subject of a lively and unrestricted controversy. It remains to be seen, however, whether the image of psychoanalysis as a bastion of homophobic prejudice can be revised.

With the rise of the broadside critique of positivism in the 1960s, a strictly scientistic defense of analysis has, with a few exceptions, been all but abandoned. However, psychoanalysis hasn't been able to come up with an alternative methodological account of itself. (This is partly the result of Freud's hostility towards philosophy.) As in so many other fields, the rejection of positivism has led to a fuzzy hermeneutical or postmodern relativism. And although these approaches perhaps appear more humane, they too are fraught with theoretical difficulties.

Like most crises, the current upheavals in psychoanalysis contain the potential for growth. The turmoil we are witnessing is, among other things, the result of the breakdown of a long-established and relatively ossified intellectual and professional paradigm. Along with the confusion comes the opportunity for original thinking. Indeed, Fred Pine, a well-respected veteran of the analytic scene, believes there hasn't been so much serious debate about fundamental issues since the 1920s.

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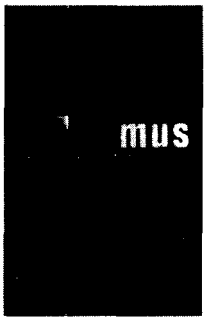
Camus

Portrait of a Moralist
STEPHEN ERIC BRONNER



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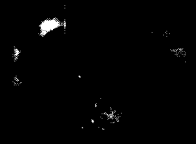

"To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the independent Pacifica Radio Network, Land, a media critic and activist, recounts the network's history in a tight, accessible narrative. . . . For Land, Pacifica embodies the power of the First Amendment, exemplifying the salutary effects of the 'disruption of conversation encouraged by vigorous dissent'".
Publishers Weekly

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MINNESOTA

Bold thinking will, however, be required for the field to resolve the crisis in a productive way and regain its vitality. If it is to attract the best minds of the new generations, psychoanalysis must clearly line up with the emancipatory movements of modernity rather than with "the immemorial figures of the Father and the Judge, of Family and Law, in the order of Order, of Authority and Punishment," to use Derrida's apt phrase. Clinically, analysts must stop defining themselves as one among many therapeutic approaches and start insisting that they have something unique to offer, namely autonomy. Similarly, analysts must give up the methodological attempt to understand and legitimize themselves in terms of other fields—most notably natural science and medicine. Instead, psychoanalysis must have the courage to explain and justify itself as a *sui generis* theoretical and practical enterprise that synthesizes elements from natural science, philosophy, medicine, religion, and traditional healing practices. Only then can its second hundred years be as creative as its first. ●

JOEL WHITEBOOK is a practicing analyst. He is the author of *Perversion and Utopia: A Study in Psychoanalysis and Critical Theory* and is completing a book on Freud and Foucault.

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The idea of a third way for the left has a long history and many incarnations. In the past it most often meant a left-wing politics that was neither revolutionary communist nor social democrat reformist; instead it sought radical transformation through deep democratic commitments. Today the possibility of a third way is being discussed by center-left governments across Europe and by Bill Clinton in the White House. This time, however, the idea is taken by many to mean a compromise between social democracy and neoliberalism. Is the third way a coherent idea? Does it represent a decisive move away from left-wing values? Or are the past ways of the left so stale that something dramatically new is needed? In the following articles authors from both sides of the Atlantic think aloud about what the third way debate means for the left—and for their own countries. -EDS.

Lost on the Third Way

Jeff Faux

"WHEN I USE a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less." "The question is," said Alice, "whether you can *make words means so many different things." "The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master—that's all." -Lewis Carroll,* Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Bill Clinton's climb in the polls—a gift of the self-destructive Republican handling of the Monica Lewinsky scandal—has reinforced the punditry's conviction that Clinton's centrist politics define the only sensible path for Democrats to follow into the twenty-first century.

It is a staple of conventional wisdom that the mainstream left has lost its compass, adrift with an outdated faith in New Deal bureaucracy and an inordinate concern for cultural freedom and for the plight of racial minorities, feminists, and other subgroups. Social democracy is said no longer to apply to the problems of developed societies. For proof, note that the long shadows of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher still shade the politics of their respective nations.

This shift in ideological fortunes has, over the last decade, energized the previously moribund conservative wings of the parties of social democracy to claim leadership with a new paradigm—the current buzzword for which is the "third way." The political success of Bill Clinton and, more recently, Tony Blair, is said to be powerful evidence that this third way is in sync with *fin-de-siecle* economic and social realities. Al From, who leads the conservative Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) and is the third way's most prominent American salesperson, describes it as "the worldwide brand name for progressive politics for the Information Age. In America, the local brand is New Democrat; in Britain, it is New Labour." Recently, the franchise has been extended, and at one time or another has been applied, or misapplied, to virtually every new leader in the Western world, including Chrétien of Canada, Prodi of Italy, Jospin of France, Salinas and Zedillo of Mexico, Schröder of Germany, Cardoso of Brazil, Menem of Argentina—even Boris Yeltsin!

Hyperbole notwithstanding, the notion of the third way promises social democrats instant liberation from the political baggage of the past and, therefore, electoral success in the future. The very ambiguity of the phrase gives politicians and ambitious policy advisers the advantage of flexibility.

But for those on the mainstream left looking for a sustainable political path to the future, the central question is whether the third way represents a new *dimension* for social democratic politics in the post-cold war era

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or merely a deftly crafted slogan designed to make the capitulation to a conservative agenda intellectually and morally respectable.

The champions of the third way insist that it is the former, a new synthesis lying somewhere *beyond,* rather than *between,* left and right. "Our agenda," says Bill Clinton "isn't liberal or conservative. It is both, and it is different." According to Tony Blair, the third way "is not simply a compromise between left and right." Our approach is neither laissez-faire nor one of state interference."

Clinton and Blair are two of the most articulate politicians of the age, and they are surrounded by clever speechwriters and advisers. Yet their definitions of the third way leave the observer without a clue as to what it means. At a recent public meeting on the third way in New York, Clinton told us that the purpose of the third way is to be "modern and progressive" and to "avoid false choices." Blair added that it was "an alliance between progress and justice," and that it "seeks to take the essential values of the center and the center-left and applies them to a world of fundamental social and economic change." Hillary Clinton made the pragmatic observation that "We have to take the world as we find it and do what we can to improve upon it." These vague sentiments could as easily have rolled off the tongues of George Bush and John Major.

Such self-definitions are not much help. To evaluate the third way requires a look at its real-world performance thus far. In Bill Clinton's six-year presidency, we now have a real-world performance to help us make some judgments. What follows is an analysis of three of the primary claims made for the third way:

- *First,* that it provides a distinct analysis of the declining political fortunes of the democratic left
- *Second,* that is it an effective formula for rebuilding social democratic political parties
- *Third,* that it is a credible new strategy for addressing the issues of the post-cold war age

On the evidence of the American experience thus far, the third way has failed to fulfill its claim to be a genuine alternative path for the democratic left. This does not mean that some second- or third-generation third way might not succeed in other places under other circumstances. And it certainly does not mean that the parties of the mainstream left do not have to adapt to a rapidly shifting political environment. But the experience strongly suggests that social democrats in America and elsewhere should look very closely at this particular new model before they buy it.

The Third Way as a Historical Analysis

In its American origins, the third way was articulated not as a grand political philosophy but as a tactical response to the Democratic Party's loss of the presidential elections of 1980 and 1984. The New Democrats, who came largely, although not exclusively, from the Southern conservative faction of the Democratic Party, argued that the party was dominated by extreme left-wing "liberal fundamentalists" who were out of touch with ordinary Americans. The liberal fundamentalists were defined as a coalition of minority groups, labor unions, feminists, and white elites who were unsympathetic to middle-class interests and values. According to this theory, traditional working-class Democrats gradually moved up the ladder of social mobility and out into the suburbs, where they were more concerned with crime rates and keeping their distance from the poor than with class warfare or economic justice. To win elections, insisted the New Democrats, the party had to give greater priority to conservative social issues and less to questions of economic security.

THEY WERE not entirely wrong. The Democratic Party *had* become identified with a social liberalism that had weakened its hold on the white working class, particularly in the American South. But the point was greatly exaggerated. No reasonable reading of recent American political history supports the premise that an extremist coalition of minorities and white liberals dominated the Democratic Party. With the exception of George McGovern's antiwar candidacy in 1972, all the Democratic presidential campaigns of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s were run on centrist platforms. The New Democrats ignored this centrist history, and instead borrowed from Republicans' caricatures of the Democratic Party. Let's take three examples.

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• *First*, the charge that the previous leaders of the Democratic Party had been fiscally irresponsible politicians addicted to "tax and spend" policies.

Ironically, the charge of fiscal irresponsibility was made by the New Democrats during a decade when Republicans were exploding the U.S. public debt from $1 trillion to $5 trillion. By any reasonable measure, the era's Democratic leaders—Michael Dukakis, Walter Mondale, Jimmy Carter, and even George McGovern, were far more fiscally responsible than Ronald Reagan and George Bush.

As for "tax and spend," the actual record is otherwise. Jimmy Carter, the previous Democratic president, reduced taxes in mid-term. Lyndon Johnson's biggest spending was on the Vietnam War—a war the New Democrats pointedly do not criticize—and history now blames him for *not* raising taxes to pay for it. The Democratic president before that, John Kennedy, cut taxes, as did Harry Truman. Postwar presidents—both Democrat and Republican—did benefit from an unindexed income tax structure that automatically linked revenues with inflation, but one has to go back nearly sixty years, to Franklin Roosevelt's financing of World War II, to find a Democratic president who could be described as deliberately pursuing a "tax and spend" economic policy.

• *Second*, the charge that early-1980s Democrats were advocates of big government, as contrasted with small-government Republicans. Again, this was largely an echo of conservative rhetoric. In reality, what divides Democrats and Republicans has not been the size of government, but government's priorities. Conservatives wanted a big government role in defense, the opening up of foreign markets, and the regulation of social behavior. Liberals wanted big government to secure a more equal distribution of income and wealth and to regulate the excesses of the market. (Interestingly, the most popular national programs tend to be those run directly by the federal government: Social Security, Medicare, the National Park Service, veterans' programs.)

This is not to say that criticism of the programs of the New Deal and Great Society was not warranted or that bureaucratic bloat is not a problem. The New Democrats were right to stress the importance of bringing modern methods of administration to government. The idea of "reinventing" public institutions is important for progressive politics. But third way Democrats were hardly the first to make the point. In fact, both previous Democratic presidents—Carter and Johnson—attempting to diffuse Republican charges that they were loose with the public purse, had made a personal fetish of micromanaging the government in order to save money.

IT HAS LONG been the case that the middle class disdains big government in the abstract but supports most of its particulars. Thus, in January 1996, Bill Clinton declared that "the era of big government is over." Yet in the following November he won his election largely by attacking Republicans for wanting to dismantle Medicare, federal aid to education, federal protection of the environment, and for opposing a raise in the minimum wage. His one concession to the right that year was signing a draconian welfare-reform bill, suggesting that the era of big government was over only for the poor. Two years later, Clinton and the Democrats picked up five House seats in the 1998 off-year election with a campaign based on defending big government's Social Security program, advocating that the federal government pay for a hundred thousand local school teachers, and pressing for stricter federal regulation of health maintenance organizations. Thus, big government programs trumped both Monica Lewinsky and the tax cuts promised by the Republicans.

• *Third*, the notion that Democrats have stood against the values of personal responsibility. This theme (again, borrowed from conservative rhetoric) has often served as a code word for race. Indeed, the New Democrats seemed to be obsessed with the racially charged issues of welfare and crime in ways that scapegoated poor minorities. This posture had political appeal, but was hardly a third way. Ironically, the major voices for nurturing a sense of personal responsibility among the poor had come from African-American politicians, the most prominent of whom was Jesse Jackson, a prime target of the New Democrat attack.

Programmatically, the New Democrat com-

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plaint about the "big government" focused on the presumed erosion of family values and work incentives that followed the expansion of welfare benefits in the early 1970s. But this expansion occurred not under the Democratic Great Society but during Richard Nixon's administration, in part as a reaction to the politically threatening self-help and community development programs championed by the New Left in the 1960s. Third way Democrats blamed liberal fundamentalists for a policy of writing welfare checks only to single mothers. But this system had been crafted largely on the insistence of conservatives who did not want welfare going to families where there was a man in the house.

Aside from the rhetoric, the New Democrats' specific proposals about welfare were often those that liberals had been advocating for years: retraining, education, child care. On the issue of crime, they called for more police on the beat, another proposal often pushed by "big government" Democrats. There was one major exception: Bill Clinton and the New Democrats loudly favored extending the death penalty.

As a critique of the program of the mainstream left in American politics, the New Democrats offered little that was new or progressive. Indeed, their strategy was to concede the imagery, fostered by conservatives for decades, of the Democratic Party as a nest of left-wing extremists. The result was to help convince the electorate that the conservatives had been correct all along.

Moving the Center to the Right

In a 1989 document, *The Politics of Evasion*, which became a manifesto of their movement, New Democrats called on the Democratic Party to nominate a "centrist" candidate who would be "credible as commander in chief" and reflect the "social values and moral sentiments of the American people." Economic issues, they argued, were secondary.

They got the next election dead wrong. Bill Clinton, the DLC's preferred candidate, had dodged the draft during the Vietnam War and certainly was not a credible commander in chief. And his personal moral failings, even at that time, were well known to voters.

Instead, Clinton ran as a traditional Democratic populist. The overwhelming issue during the campaign, in the words of Clinton's campaign manager, was "the economy, stupid." Discontent with unemployment, not New Democrat social issues or superior credibility on military matters, elected Bill Clinton in 1992. Again in 1996, Clinton campaigned largely as a Democratic populist and won that election as well on increased turnout of the traditional Democratic base of labor unions, minority groups, and working-class women, whom the New Democrats had assigned to history's dustbin. Only after the election did he return to third way politics. Even at this writing, trapped in a tawdry sex scandal, it is the good state of the U.S. economy that keeps his approval ratings high. Moreover, polls show that over the last two decades, the American electorate has become more liberal on social issues, such as race and gender relations and acceptance of homosexuality. In terms of American politics, the lesson of the Clinton presidency is that full employment beats conservative family values—just the opposite of the New Democrats' claim.

From the perspective of the left, an evaluation of the third way depends not so much on Clinton's personal success or failure, but on the degree to which he has (1) moved ahead an agenda based on progressive values and (2) strengthened the Democratic Party, whose active core is on the left, and other progressive social institutions.

In his first six years, Clinton presided over some scattered, small improvements, as well as some deterioration, in public programs. Honest scholars may differ on whether there was a small net gain or a small net loss. What is undeniable is that, either way, the change is small. In effect, his presidency has broken the "two steps forward, one step back" ideological rhythm of American politics, in which a Democratic president establishes a new set of social policies that his Republican successor modifies but cannot completely rescind. There has been not one major progressive step forward under Clinton, much less two. All of his major accomplishments to date—cuts in domestic spending to balance the budget, welfare reform, and free trade agree-

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ments that protect investors, but not workers or the environment—promoted the business agenda.

His contribution to social progress has been at best mixed. He deserves some credit for attempting to engage Americans on the issue of race relations—which was decidedly *not* on the New Democrat agenda—by holding public seminars on the meaning of affirmative action. But this initiative had no programmatic content and little came of it. Nor is there much good to say about Clinton's record on criminal justice. He was instrumental in expanding the number of federal crimes to which the death penalty could be applied and making it harder to prevent the execution of innocent people.

Clinton's historic opportunity was in the area of health care. Today some forty-three million Americans are without health insurance coverage and another thirty million have coverage that is wholly inadequate.

Clinton attempted to address this issue in the first two years of his presidency. But to avoid being cast as an advocate of big government, he refused to stake out a clear position for an understandable government-regulated system, opting instead for a third way compromise with the business community. The result was a proposal that was so complicated and confusing that it became an easy target for the private health insurance corporations to attack as a bureaucratic monster and was ultimately abandoned by Clinton's corporate allies. When they retreated, Clinton dropped the effort, leaving the impression that a public solution to America's growing health care problem was not feasible—even though it was never voted on in the Congress and polls still show that most Americans favor some kind of public health-insurance program.

This episode reveals how third way politics keeps shifting the political discussion to the right. On the worldwide spectrum of health care policies, the options range from socialized medicine, in which the government directly manages the health care system, to laissez-faire medicine, where the costs are directly borne by the individual. Canadian-style national health insurance, in which the government finances the system but does not operate it, is a third way. In the Clinton debate, however, national health insurance was defined as the extreme left position and his plan as the third way. New Democrats then shifted further to the right, supporting a proposal closer to that of the private insurance companies, which became the third way, with Clinton's compromise plan on the extreme left.

Undermining the Base

The erosion of the power of both political parties in American politics has been going on for some time, but under Clinton the process dramatically accelerated for the Democrats *relative to the Republicans*. On the eve of the 1992 presidential election, the Democratic Party had a hundred-member majority in the U.S. House of Representatives. After the election of 1998, despite the pickup in seats, it was in the minority by twelve members. In 1992, the party had a fourteen-vote majority in the U.S. Senate. Today it is in the minority by ten votes. In 1992, Democrats controlled thirty governorships; today they control seventeen. In the aggregate, in 1992, there were 1,537 more Democrats than Republicans in the fifty state legislatures. In six years that edge dwindled to 359.

The Democrats' share of the two-party vote for the House of Representatives fell from 54 percent of the vote in 1992 to less than 50 percent in 1998. As political analyst Ruy Teixeira of the Economic Policy Institute has shown, the driving phenomenon is the Democrats' loss of support among low- and middle-income non-college graduates, who are not convinced that the party's economic program can help them. Thus, the Democrats are left with a base of union members and African Americans motivated primarily by a fear of Republicans. The bulk of the college-educated, upper-income suburban vote, so prized by the third way, still goes to the GOP.

The weakening of party is implicit in the New Democrat paradigm. Indeed, a strong well-functioning party is an obstacle to a leader dedicated to pragmatism. If the end, rather than the means, is compromise, then one doesn't want to be burdened by a party's interpretation of the nation's purpose.

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The social institutions that support the democratic left in America have also been weakened after six years of the third way. Despite his pledge to America's trade unions during the 1992 campaign, Bill Clinton failed to deliver the votes for a desperately needed reform of labor law, which makes the United States the most difficult place to organize workers in the advanced world. As a result, the unionized share of the labor force has continued to decline—to 14.1 percent in 1997. And the growth of public-sector unionism, which had cushioned the decline of union coverage in the private sector, has now stalled. Labor's deteriorated condition led to an unprecedented internal revolt against the national leadership of the AFL-CIO in 1995.

There has also been a general weakening of the power of progressive nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)—the "third sector" that third way advocates often posit as an alternative to government. The erosion of the environmentalist, consumer, and community-organizing movements has been in part a result of domestic budget cutting and lowered expectations on the left, and in part a result of the expansion of conservative NGOs supported by corporations and right-wing political groups. As the institutions of the democratic left have weakened, those of the right have grown stronger, shifting the center of politics further rightward.

No Strategy for the Global Economy

Another favorite claim of the third way's merchandisers is that they represent a new paradigm for the new global economy. As with many of their social reforms, their new economic paradigm is not in fact new; it is an articulation of the agenda of the multinational corporate community. It is no accident that the financial support for New Democrat organizations has come largely from business—particularly the financial sector.

The assertion of the New Democrats is that the world's economic problems stem from too much government interference in the market economy, which if left alone is self-regulating and stable. Indeed, capitalism is bringing us a vast new prosperous world economy, built by entrepreneurs in the high-tech and finance industries. To assure that this prosperity continues, capital and labor markets, both domestic and international, should be further deregulated and freed from artificial constraints, such as those imposed by labor unions and environmental regulations that are largely obsolete. Making labor markets more "flexible" will raise productivity, which will automatically raise the living standards of working people who no longer need to bargain collectively.

New Democrats believe that government should get out of the way of the free market and stop trying to guarantee "outcomes." Its job is to provide "opportunities" for disadvantaged individuals to get education and training (and to accumulate capital through the privatization of Social Security). Where government plays a role, it should be at the most decentralized level possible.

The strong performance of the U.S. economy during the six years of the Clinton presidency is offered as proof of the validity of these ideas. We have certainly had a robust economy since 1992. But we must put it in perspective: by historical standards, the rate of growth in production, jobs, and investment is about average, slightly better than some business cycles, slightly worse than others. It has lasted a bit longer than most business expansions, which have typically been aborted when U.S. monetary authorities reacted to price inflation stemming from war or external energy-supply shocks. The 1990s have been blessed by the absence of either.

THERE IS a widespread impression, encouraged by the business press and the American policy elite, that the United States has reached some new plateau of dynamic economic development as a result of painful but necessary restructuring. But the evidence does not support that claim. Indeed, by some fundamental measures of economic performance, the American economy in the 1990s has actually performed less well than those of other advanced nations. For example, from 1990 through 1997, American per capita gross domestic product actually grew more slowly than that of Germany and Japan and no faster than that of the United Kingdom, France, and Italy. During this period, produc-

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tivity growth has also been higher among all other G-7 nations except Canada. Moreover, recent estimates by the U.S. Business Conference Board, a highly respected source of business statistics, shows that average productivity in France, Western Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium has now caught up to that of the United States.

What is extraordinary about the current business cycle expansion is not the normal macroeconomic performance of the U.S. economy but the abnormally poor performance of the European Union and Japanese economies over the last six years. Each of these has its own story. In Europe, growth has been restricted because of the difficulties and uncertainties of monetary union and the reunification of Germany. Despite the conventional wisdom that Europe's problems are centered in its labor market rigidities, serious economists who have compared U.S. and European growth patterns attribute most of the difference to macroeconomic, particularly monetary, policies.

In Japan, growth has been stagnant because of the deep financial crisis and the reluctance of the Japanese government to use public monies to restructure its banking system (in ironic contrast to the willingness of the "laissez-faire" U.S. administrations of Reagan and Bush to interfere in the market at the time of the U.S. banking crisis in the 1980s).

JOB CREATION, of course, has been greater in the United States over the past business cycle, largely as a result of a looser monetary policy and an expansion of private consumer debt that drove the personal savings in September 1998 to negative numbers for the first time since 1933. The secret of the buoyant U.S. labor market is not a *new* story of flexibility (U.S. labor markets are in fact slightly less flexible in 1998 than they were in 1992), but the *old* story of the unique position of the American dollar, which allows the United States to continue to borrow for consumption from the rest of the world.

The new global economy, which the third way aggressively promotes, undercuts third way premises every day. As a result of financial deregulation, the mobility of private capital has now outstripped the capacity of governments and international agencies to keep markets from self-destructing and to keep their people from suffering the brutal consequences. The response has been a rising hostility to globalization—from unemployed rioters in Jakarta, to striking autoworkers in Flint, Michigan, to angry unpaid miners and teachers in Moscow.

Today the third way's attacks on big-government "interference" in the marketplace are being mocked by growing demands by multinational businesses—from Tokyo to New York—that big government save them from the consequences of the market. Bill Clinton, after urging Americans to embrace the unfettered global marketplace for six years, is suddenly calling for global "New Deal" solutions to brace up sinking financial markets. Tony Blair—who may be more ideologically nimble than even Bill Clinton—has begun to call for levels of international financial regulation that left-wing thinkers have been proposing for years. Blair's wish list includes extraordinary new powers for the International Monetary Fund, new global bureaucracies to enforce financial regulation, and even a global central bank. Doubtless, we will soon be told that new and enlarged international bureaucracies represent a third way to smaller government.

Clinton and Blair are right about the need for stronger global institutions to regulate the global economy. When the United States was transformed from a series of regional markets to a continental economy, it had to create a continental system of economic governance to balance the power of private capital. This system included a central bank to promote growth, securities laws to bring confidence to financial markets, and federal rules to prevent states from using sweatshop labor to compete for investment. As a result, national prosperity was broadly shared and the economy became more productive.

The global marketplace has no such balance. Recent international trade agreements—such as NAFTA and the establishment of the World Trade Organization—impose American-style protection of corporate interests while undermining the capacity of national govern-

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ments to enforce American-style labor, banking, and environmental standards. This imbalanced growth is at the core of the current global crisis. Until we build global institutions and policies that serve the interests of the world's workers as well as the world's investors, further deregulation of finance and trade will lead to even more economic instability—and political chaos.

Ignoring Inequality

The experience of the Clinton years also reveals a fundamental contradiction in the New Democrats' thinking. They insist that government can play the role of guarantor of opportunity in the free market, but they refuse to address (or even acknowledge) the correlation between the distribution of wealth and the distribution of political power in our society.

Without institutions with egalitarian values—progressive government bureaucracies, labor unions, social democratic parties—that can challenge the unequal distribution of market incomes, productivity improvements will not be widely shared. For example, over the last two decades, the share of the U.S. economy that was open to the world markets doubled. Globalization made a major contribution to the undercutting of union power and the shrinking of the portion of the labor force that was organized. Before this shift, the real wages of non-supervisory workers rose in tandem with increases in U.S. productivity. But now that relationship has disappeared. Since 1979 the productivity of the typical American worker has risen by 22 percent, while his or her real wages have fallen by 8 percent. Workers' real wages and benefits in the U.S. economy are still, after six years of economic expansion, 3 percent below where they were in 1989, the peak of the last business cycle.

A similar story can be told of America's NAFTA partners—Canada and Mexico—where productivity has vastly outstripped wage growth. In this context, the glib third way notion that the answer to the downward pressure of globalization on workers' wages is simply better training or education to make workers even more productive is simple-minded; it ignores the function of bargaining power in determining the division of proceeds of production between capital and labor.

The third-way presidency has not even lived up to its own faulty promises on this score. Very few of Clinton's 1992 training proposals have in fact materialized. As a share of the national economy, spending on retraining workers has fallen and is projected to continue to fall. Neither has Washington been willing to make adequate long-term investments in education. In 1996, the General Accounting Office reported that the nation needed another $112 billion to restore public school buildings—repair the roofs, drive the rats out of the basements, and wire the school rooms for computers. In his 1997 budget, President Clinton suggested an interest-subsidy program of $5 billion for this purpose. The Republican Congress resisted. When the final compromises on the budget were negotiated, the amount decided on was zero.

Lowering Expectations

The insufficient resources devoted to training and education reveal the extent to which the third way represents a one-sided compromise with corporate conservatism rather than a new dimension for progressive politics. The third way's relentless complaints about "big government" have acted like an echo chamber to the right-wing denunciation of social democracy. The message to the average American facing the brutal competition of the new global economy was: "You are on your own."

The result was a dramatic *lowering of expectations of government*. A recent survey of public opinion found that 75 percent of Americans believe that the federal government should give high priority to ensuring that all Americans have access to affordable health care, but only 15 percent believe that the government is actually giving it a high priority. By giving support to the lowering of people's expectations of government, New Democrats have undercut the power of government to fulfill even the modest responsibilities they assign to it.

As a result, New Democrats have made it difficult for progressives to rally political support for public investments now that the budget is in surplus. The public, which still believes that government *should* address the in-

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creasing insecurity of workers in the global economy, is convinced that it will not or cannot do it, and thus would rather have its money back in the form of tax cuts. Meanwhile, New Democrats, having no stomach for confrontation with the still-huge U.S. military-industrial complex, reinforce pressures for more government spending in the most bloated and inefficient sector of the public budget. Supported by Wall Street, they have also been at the forefront of a campaign to privatize the Social Security system, destroying the most successful social program of the century, which is both symbol and substance of progressive democratic values.

It has been fascinating to watch the third way evolve over the course of Bill Clinton's presidency, in response to the requirements of electoral politics. Between 1994 and 1996, Clinton's reliance on the votes of women and minorities and the financial support of Wall Street led to a softening of the New Democrats' social conservatism, and an embrace of the finance industry's view of the economy. And now that the next New Democrat president needs the re-energized labor movement and a unified party to win in 2000, the Democratic Leadership Council activists have moderated their pro-business, anti-union rhetoric and broadened their definition of the third way to include virtually every position a practicing Democrat can hold.

At a recent conference, one of the co-authors of the original New Democrat manifesto that denounced liberal fundamentalism called for a discussion among Democrats to fill in the *meaning* of the third way, which he acknowledged was still somewhat of a "marketing concept." Another third-way sympathizer defined it as occupying the political space between "armed revolution and complete laissez-faire capitalism." Which is to say: the third way has become so wide that it is more like a political parking lot than a highway to anywhere in particular.

The Real Question

Because the third way is such an intellectually amorphous substance, it may be that the U.S. experience is not definitive. But the performance of the Clinton presidency provides the best empirical measure to date of the third way's relevance to our political condition. On the basis of that experience we can conclude the following:

(1) The third way has not been a new principle that can lead us to a dimension of the political cosmos that is *beyond* left and right. It is primarily a rationalization for political compromise *between* left and right, in which the left moves closer to the right. Political compromise is built into electoral democracy, but principled compromise starts with the principles, not the compromise.

(2) Contrary to the conventional wisdom of the policy class, the elections of 1992, 1996, and 1998 were not run on a third way platform. It was the Democratic Party base, despised by the third way, that salvaged Clinton's presidency after the disaster of 1994. Clinton did not campaign on the third way, he governed from it. As one conservative columnist approvingly put it, Clinton's strategy was to "take an essentially conservative program and repackage it for liberals." The result is a confused agenda that has shrunk the Democratic Party's base to those whose politics are driven by fear of Republicans.

(3) Neither has policy based on the political values of the democratic left been advanced. The share of the federal budget going to social investment has declined, the health care system has deteriorated, and the social safety net has been further shredded. In 1998, Wall Street interests dominate American politics more than they did in 1992.

(4) Third-way advocates have made a contribution by reminding the social democrats of the importance of an *efficient* as well as a compassionate public sector. Rebuilding government competence must be an important element in a reconstruction of social democracy in the coming years. But in the end, many of their specific policy proposals are little different from what liberals have long been proposing. On the other hand, by joining the right's attack on government, third-wayers have undermined public support for investments in the public sector and have reinforced the demoralization of the civil service—which ultimately makes government less efficient and effective.

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(5) The third way has narrowed the subject of American politics from the governance of society to the governance of the public sector. Thus, the issue of poverty has become the issue of managing the welfare program. The issue of health care has become the issue of the Medicare and Medicaid budgets. The issue of distribution of income and wealth and power in America has become the issue of the distributional impact of government spending. In the American experience, the third way has not succeeded in making government a vehicle for "an alliance between progress and justice." It has succeeded in lowering the public's expectations of government's capacity to deliver either progress or justice.

That the third way leads to a dead end does not lessen the urgency for a credible and effective social democratic politics for a post–cold war era. However, the task of such a politics is not to accommodate but to challenge humanity's descent into a world that equates prices with values. To do that, it must work not to lower but to raise the expectations of the people.

This is not a time for the democratic left to abandon its commitment to communitarian solutions. It is the time to show the people *that they are not alone.*

This is not the time for the democratic left to concede that inequality and ecological destruction are necessary prices to pay for growth. It is the time to judge economic growth according to how broadly shared are its benefits—with both today's and future generations.

This is not the time for the democratic left to abandon its analysis of class. It is time to update its categories in recognition of the new and subtler ways in which class lines are drawn in advanced societies

This is not the time to create a politics on the principle of compromise. It is the time to re-establish clear principles upon which honest compromises can be struck.

In the end, on the question of how many fundamental "ways" there are in democratic politics, we must give the last word not to William Jefferson Clinton but to Thomas Jefferson. In a letter to the Marquis de Lafayette in 1823, Jefferson concluded that there were just two fundamental choices:

> In truth, the parties of Whig and Tory are those of nature. They exist in all countries, whether called by those names, or by those of Aristocrats and Democrats, Côte Droite and Côte Gauche, Ultras and Radicals, Serviles and Liberals.

The question remains, as always: "Which is to be master?"

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Britain: Recycling the Third Way

Alan Ryan

In Britain, the intellectual credibility of the third way is at its lowest ebb since the election of May 1997. Many commentators now declare that reality is catching up with a flawed idea. Harsher critics dismiss the suggestion that there was ever an idea for reality to catch up with. In their view, the third way was never more than a screen or fig leaf for the Labour Party's abandonment of its traditional values and policies. This is the view of the so-called Labour "hard left," including Members of Parliament Tony Benn and Dennis Skinner. Even the more moderate left appears to think that the third way was only a matter of Tony Blair and Peter Mandelson ostentatiously reassuring "middle England" that taxes would not rise, that the trade unions would never again rise up in revolt, and that after eighteen years of Margaret Thatcher they could safely vote Labour. It is therefore widely believed that with the sudden departure of Peter Mandelson the third way has collapsed. Mandelson, was widely credited with using his skills as a spin doctor to ensure Blair's hold on his Party and his Party's hold on the electorate. Few people noticed that he was an efficient Minister for Trade and Industry, too, whose major offense was wanting a nice house and having a friend who would buy it for him. That is to say, the alliance of Blair and Mandelson has collapsed, and with it the public relations exercise that got Labour into power in May 1997.

I do not much like the Labour government: it kowtows to business and to the tabloid press; it encourages illiberal sentiments on crime, sex, immigration, and education; when sensible independent thought would be useful, it sides unthinkingly with the United States over Iraq. Nonetheless, I want to argue an unfashionable case—that there is a third way; indeed, that the tradition of governing Britain according to the principles of the third way is as old as the century.

Having made that much of a concession to Mr. Blair, however, I should add that the third way does not define "New Labour." The third way first showed up in British politics ninety-five years ago. At that point it was, and so far as it is coherent it remains, the ideology known as the New Liberalism. From 1908 to 1914, it animated the reforming Liberal governments of Herbert Asquith and David Lloyd-George. It was defended by philosophers (L.T. Hobhouse and the pre-1914 Bertrand Russell), economists (John Maynard Keynes), and by the begetter of the British welfare state, Lord Beveridge. The truth is that the third way is neither New Labour, as its admirers say, nor warmed-over Thatcherism, as its detractors say, but a reversion to a very old idea.

To say this distresses my social democratic friends; they rightly point out that the Labour Party owes much to the social democratic heritage of the British labor movement, and that a Labour Party committed to social democracy swept away the Liberals in the 1920s and 1930s, and replaced them as the only serious anti-Conservative party. All that is true; but the other side of the coin is that if the Liberal Party had not destroyed itself by taking Britain into the First World War, it would have swallowed the Labour Party and not the other way around. The Fabian Society had hoped to work through the Liberal Party, did not want an independent labor-based party, and reckoned that "Lib-Lab" members of parliament would represent the interests of working people perfectly well. Until 1914, that seemed an entirely plausible project.

Tony Blair's version of the third way amounts, rhetorically speaking, to "neither-nor." That is to say, neither state socialism nor

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libertarian conservatism; it neither puts its trust in the state's control of increasingly large areas of human life nor does it wish to reject state action in principle. It is neither *étatiste* nor committed to Thatcher's claim that "there is no such thing as society." Positively, it is communitarian, and negatively, it finds the third way by avoiding two familiar and famous errors—the belief that political control inevitably improves upon the random and chaotic operations of the market, and the belief that it never does. The thought that animates enthusiasts for the third way is that we need neither try to gain complete control over the economy in order to secure prosperity and full employment nor give up the attempt to do something to secure these things. If there is a course to be set between Scylla and Charybdis, the third way is it.

The New Labour project does not address itself particularly to the state's role in smoothing out the business cycle; in that sense it is thoroughly post-Keynesian. But it does address itself to employment. Indeed, the central aim of third way policy is to use a variety of forms of state intervention, through the education system at all ages, through job-training schemes, and through reconfiguring the payment of unemployment benefits, in order to get more people fit for work and eager to be employed, and by making them members of the working population to bring them back into the social, cultural, and moral mainstream.

THE EMPHASIS on work as a means to membership in the wider society is itself a third way thought, and, of course, a commonplace in recent American discussion. There is nothing in the Labour government's emphasis on work to deny that the first benefit of full employment is the physical well-being of people who would otherwise be unemployed and hard up, badly housed, and perhaps even hungry in consequence. But some distinctively American anxieties are also in play. Where Americans have feared that black inner-city residents have become locked into a culture of poverty, British commentators have begun to fear that uneducated working-class boys have become unemployable; where Americans fear that black teenage mothers demoralize both themselves and their children, the British have begun to have the same fears about uneducated working-class teenage girls. Whether these are fears they ought to have is another question. It is true that Britain and the United States have the highest rate of out-of-wedlock births in the developed world; but they are very far from being the societies with the highest rates of unemployment.

What is striking is that these anxieties are very like the anxieties of turn-of-the-century pre-Labour Britain and quite unlike the anxieties of 1920s to 1960s Britain. The sharpness of the class warfare of the interwar years made the control of coal mining, steel-making, and transport central to political debate; and the depth of the depression that arrived in 1919 and ended only with the outbreak of the Second World War made full employment, a national health service, a more egalitarian education system, and the abolition of means-tested benefits major issues for Labour. Today, the old class structure has gone. The yuppies making several hundred thousand a year in the City are not doing it through the ownership of the means of production, and the same goes for the army of lawyers and management consultants. "Middle England" is worried about pensions, taxation, the quality of their children's education, crime, and what they see as the collapse of civility. It is not surprising that New Labour admires President Clinton's electoral success; the British electorate is today very much closer to the American electorate than it has ever been—leaving to one side the happy absence of the Christian Right from British politics.

The third way rests on the assumption that the ownership of the means of production is not the central issue in politics. Since Clause Four of the Labour Party constitution—printed on every membership card until four years ago—said it was the intention of the Party to secure the benefits of production for workers by hand and brain by means of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, it was a genuinely radical move for Tony Blair to throw out Clause Four. Hugh Gaitskell had wanted to do it in the 1950s, but knew he couldn't, and none of

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his successors as leader had thought it worth trying. But if ownership isn't central, what is?

Here is where there is a genuine hole at the heart of Labour policy. It is well known that the British economy is pretty unimpressive; the productivity of the workforce is thought to be some 40 percent lower than that of the American workforce and 20 percent lower than that of the German workforce. Even if those figures are too high, nobody doubts that the income of the average Briton is 20 percent lower than that of the average German or French worker. Within the European Union, only Portugal and Greece are unequivocally poorer than Britain. The recently privatized railways are a national joke, and many public services, from the National Health Service through to inner-city primary schools, are shabby and underfunded, staffed by depressed and demoralized workers, and delivering results that everyone knows to be inferior to what is produced in the rest of Europe.

Even so, British industry and the rest of the productive economy are efficient enough to be something other than the providers of employment of last resort. The government is in something of a cleft stick, indeed. On the one hand, the government wants a more productive economy; it is a national embarrassment to be so much less efficient than our major European partners. And the government wants a competitive economy. This means that it will not—usually—intervene to second-guess the decisions of managers and shareholders. I say "usually" because there has been one piece of thoroughly old-fashioned Old Labour intervention in the affairs of the electricity supply industry. Last summer, the government insisted that no more gas-fired power stations were to be built in the next five years, as a way of supporting the few remaining coal mines.

But as this example suggests, the government wants on the other hand to keep up employment; it wants this not only to take the weight off unpopular expenditure on unemployment benefits, but because it genuinely believes that work is morally good for people. The more of us who go to work on a regular basis, the better we shall be as a people. This conviction has already led the government into one embarrassment. Its desire to get single mothers into employment led it to propose the reduction of the state benefits they ordinarily receive if they refuse to join programs designed to train them for work. Although a variant on the scheme was approved by Parliament, it was resisted by large numbers of backbench Labour members. The larger embarrassment is so far potential rather than actual, however.

The economy is still reasonably healthy. Unemployment is not yet rising; layoffs are increasing, but late in 1998 it was still true that more jobs were being created than lost. What will happen when that ceases to be true? The business cycle has not been abolished, and even if there is the hoped-for "soft landing" when growth slows, there will be a rise in unemployment. Will the government step in as employer of last resort? If it does, what happens to its pledges not to raise taxes (or increase public debt) in the lifetime of the present Parliament—which ends in 2002? No amount of third way rhetoric can get the government off that hook. Yet it is not clear that the government has any wiggle room. If work is the key to citizen virtue, and government policies in education and welfare are designed to make people work-ready and work-eager, the government will be in trouble if it cannot ensure that there are jobs for them to go to.

This is not a novel point. Even defenders of the government, such as Raymond Plant, have raised it. But it goes to the heart of the question whether there is room for a third route to good policy and political success. At the point where the crunch comes, a government seems likely to have to move further left or further right; either it will bite the bullet and raise taxes or go into debt in order to create employment, or it will run up the flag of fiscal rectitude and see unemployment rise rather than raise taxes (anyway likely to be counter-productive in a slump) or increase the budget deficit. Critics of New Labour such as Will Hutton, author of *The State We're In*, complain that the government does not know its own mind, or in the alternative that it will move to the right in a crisis. Labour supporters have long memories; not only do they re-

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member the events of 1976 when the British government had to submit to the instructions of the International Monetary Fund, they even remember the disaster of seventy years ago when the Labour government led by Ramsay Macdonald adopted orthodox conservative economics as the economy headed into a slump, and kept the Party out of power for the next fourteen years.

Those with fairly short memories will find themselves leaning in the other direction. The Labour government that lost power in 1979 was swept out of office by the widespread feeling that it was simply unable to govern. The so-called "winter of discontent," when large numbers of public-sector workers went on strike, is remembered as a time when mountains of trash were piled in city streets, and funerals were turned away from cemeteries by muncipal workers who refused to allow families to bury their dead. The winter of discontent turned out to have destroyed the power of the trade unions even more effectively than that of the Labour government. The moral drawn by many Labour supporters was that the party must be as tough on the trade unions as Thatcher had been—a view that certainly seems to resonate with Mandelson and Blair.

To the extent that such a view prevails, the government will tilt right rather than left when it confronts the question of what to do about unemployment. It will reassure the holders of government securities and the anti-tax citizens of Middle England rather than becoming the employer of last resort. Of course, the government itself professes to believe that this moment of crisis will not come. Its critics expect it to come sooner rather than later. In other areas, the crux is less sharp. In education, there is a tension between a traditional Labour attachment to egalitarian provision by way of local government providers and a new skepticism about local government that leads Labour, just as it has led so many American states, toward handing over schools to private entrepreneurs. That seems likely to lead it toward allowing parents in a given district to vote to abolish selective schools—thus sacrificing academic excellence for the sake of egalitarianism—while issuing increasingly prescriptive guidelines about curricular and instructional matters—thus sacrificing local democracy and the independence of teachers for the sake of modest academic efficiency.

The old third way had an easier time. It was concerned to find productive ways of expanding the state's role, while preserving liberalism's devotion to individual freedom. That is why British New Liberals spoke the same language as American progressive liberals such as John Dewey. The new third way is trying to roll back state intervention in the teeth of skepticism about untrammeled free markets, operating a more authoritarian approach to the criminal justice system than any Liberal or Old Labour government would have been content with, simultaneously risking greater devolution to Scotland and Wales than any previous government and imposing tighter controls on local government than even Thatcher had in mind. To put it another way; to the extent that it is a coherent or acceptable approach to government it resembles the New Liberalism of the beginning of the century; to the extent that it does not resemble it, it is neither coherent nor attractive. And its electoral charms are likely to prove rather short-lived, too. ●

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A View from Italy

Michele Salvati

ITALIANS HAVE been talking about the third way for thirty years, from our first center-left government in the early 1960s to the collapse of communism. But we spoke of a different kind from today's: it was a third way between communism and social democracy or, more generally, between a radical or revolutionary program and the experience of social democratic governments in Western Europe. It was still a reformist way, but reforms were to be "structural," aiming at the core of capitalism. In contrast to social democratic reforms, these aimed to be "destabilizing" reforms, disruptive of key capitalist equilibria, and seeking to set in motion a process of almost revolutionary change.

Actually, Italian communists were long suspicious of the radical overtones of the "old" third-way debate, because it was mainly fueled by left-wing socialists and *gauchistes* of various brands. Plain social democratic policies could not be recognized as fully legitimate by the Italian Communist Party (PCI), which sought to distinguish *riformista*—a bad thing, weak and social democratic—from good, communist *riformatore*. There was a "right wing" of the PCI that increasingly saw the social democratic experience as a source of inspiration. It recognized that the split between social democracy and communism had been a disaster and that the arch-revisionist Eduard Bernstein was largely right. These people (and what remains of the old Socialist Party) are most distrustful of today's third way. The PCI, they note, has finally changed its name, adopted a social democratic platform, rejected communism, and joined the Socialist International. But now quite a few people are talking about a new third way—not an intermediate path between communism and social democracy, but a third way between social democracy and neoliberalism. This is too much.

Today's third-way debate takes different shapes in different countries. It doesn't entail quite the same program in Britain and Italy, the United States and Brazil. So there is actually a plurality of "new" third ways. Sometimes they are culturally specific, national programs, and sometimes little more than electoral catchwords. But is there something more than this? Does all this talk about a third way in different national contexts actually point to an underlying common problem for the left?

My answer is a qualified yes. We must ask if it makes sense to draw a sharp line between successful left-wing politics of the past and those that are suitable for today's advanced, postindustrial societies. If so, does this mark a profound, epoch-making shift, similar to the divide between the liberal democratic left of the post-French Revolution period and the distinctly socialist left that came after?

Dimensions of Change

To determine if there has been such a profound break in our times, we need to look at three entwined matters: (a) the value system of the left; (b) the world in which those values are pursued (I'll call this the "world dimension"); and (c) the theoretical tools deployed by the left to make sense of the world and to devise policies for changing it. Obviously I distinguish sharply between these dimensions only for heuristic purposes; in fact it is difficult to imagine a major change in one that does not affect at least one of the others. An important shift in the nature of the left must follow from a change in its values, a dramatic change in the "world," or a basic change in its means of understanding the world and political action. Anthony Giddens's book *Beyond Left and Right* clearly puts the epicenter

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of the third way earthquake in the "world" dimension, in the new social and economic situation that the left has to face. Still, as in the past, the value and theoretical domains are deeply involved.

Turning Points

If we briefly survey epochal shifts in the history of the left we can establish something of a benchmark with which to assess today's new third way. Two turning points are fundamental: the transition in the nineteenth century from a liberal democratic (I'll call it the "Whig") left to a socialist one, and then in the twentieth century, the split between social democrats and the communists. The first transition is most relevant because the kind of social and economic change (the "world," dimension) that prompted a strategic shift then bears comparison to today. In addition, the Blair version—and perhaps others—of the third way can be seen as a modern "Whiggism."

The social democratic-communist split had more to do with value systems. Social democrats and communists looked at the same world through different ideological lenses. Although the material conditions for a successful revolution varied considerably between Russia and Central and Western Europe, there were social democrats and communists (or revolutionary socialists) across the entire continent. Differences in social and economic conditions may help to explain the prevalence of this or that wing within the socialist movement of a given country, but not the radical split between the two wings. This is why the ideological or "value" dimension is critical. Marxism was the main theoretical tool of the continental labor movement and the rift in the turbulent aftermath of World War I concerned the definition of both the short-term and final goals of the socialist parties. But the split had been in the making before then. It had been accepted as an article of faith that the "real" solution to the exploitation of the working class was the abolition of private property and markets, and their replacement by a collectivized economy. Because it was difficult to envisage such radical change occurring by peaceful means and within the "bourgeois" legal order, everybody on the left assumed that this eventually meant a revolution. For "right-wing" socialists this was, of course, a more distant prospect. But nonrevolutionary conclusions could come only after a complete reshaping of the left's intellectual framework, and Eduard Bernstein alone, deeply influenced by British labor (and Whig) traditions, made a sustained attempt to do this. As a consequence he became an outcast in the German and continental labor movements.

More relevant for today is the other earlier turning point in the history of the left. This entailed a slower change in the late nineteenth century: the gradual displacement of bourgeois radical parties by labor and socialist ones as the main parliamentary representatives of the left. By the 1920s many liberal parties had been both weakened and pushed toward the center of the spectrum.

How did these developments affect the left? They led to an increasing focus on the social and economic ("material") conditions that have to underpin civil and political rights, that is, the provision of welfare, education, and job security for all citizens. The articulation of "social rights," as T.H. Marshall called them, came with a long-term parallel theoretical shift due to Marxism. The break it effected in worldview between the bourgeois and the socialist left cannot be underestimated. Everywhere, even in countries in which Marxism did not become the predominant theoretical model in the left, a clear change in emphasis and concepts occurred. Socialists everywhere now spoke of "capitalism" as a historically contingent mode of economic organization that could and would be changed. Socialists everywhere, Marxist or not, were convinced that their own values implied if not revolutionary transformation, then profound reforms. And one did not have to be Marxist to demand dramatic limits on the power of private property in the organization of production and stricter public regulation of markets. Such concerns with how the economy is organized—the "material" basis of rights—was a hallmark of all socialists.

The real underlying shift, however, was in the "world" dimension—the economic and social conditions of Europe in the mid-nineteenth century. With mass industrialization,

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millions of people were pushed out of agrarian work and artisan trades and then melded into an industrial proletariat whose circumstances were truly miserable. This represented a massive social change that disrupted previous social conditions. Without it the value system and theoretical instruments of the left as a whole would not have changed so dramatically and the Whig left would not have been pushed aside by a socialist left. The latter differed from the former by making new, radical demands about social and economic life and focusing on industrial workers instead of on bourgeois and petty-bourgeois strata. Importantly, the socialists insisted on a new division between friend and foe. The enemy of the Whig left was the church, aristocracy, and landed classes, that is, the various supporters of the *ancien régime*. They continued to be enemies for socialists, but capitalists were now added and made central. This inevitably strained relations between the two strands of the left.

Although our focus is turning points in the left, we should also note some continuities. For instance, socialist views on equality can be seen as an enlargement of liberal democratic values. The main civil and political demands of democratic liberals—like the rights of free association or universal suffrage—were taken up by socialists. Such rights were far from secure at the turn of the twentieth century. In most European countries they solidified only after the Second World War, just when "social rights" were being put on the agenda by social democrats. In this sense, today's social democracy was already a kind of "third way," coming out of a blend of liberalism and socialism.

All this is a bit schematic, but it points to the key question we must now pose: What is the relation between social democracy and today's "third way?" Has there been a radical socio-economic change comparable to the industrial revolution? Ought the left to respond with radically new values, objectives, and political strategies? Are there new social groups and forces at work that social democracy neglects? Should there be a new definition of friend and foe?

Answering these questions is somewhat complicated in part because of the eclectic nature of present-day social democracy. It is an often muddled melange of theoretical tools, ideological references, and actual practices that took form initially as the welfare state and demand management. Ecology and feminism were subsequently integrated into its agenda. When more socialist ideas emerged within social democratic movements, such as the Meidner plan in Sweden, they were rejected. So if we compare today's social democracy with today's "third way," our benchmark is not Karl Kautsky or the 1959 Bad Godesberg program that reformed the German Social Democratic Party. Rather, it is the hyper-revisionist, contemporary program of European social democratic parties, each of which represents slightly different compromises between socialist and liberal principles. Indeed, why even speak of a new "third way?"

THE REASON is twofold. First of all, the traditional socialist vocabulary has taken a heavy blow because of the bankruptcy of the Soviet experiment. Second, and more important, capitalism has changed. Consequently there are serious difficulties in the actual policies advocated by the left. The Keynes-Beveridge strategy worked well until the 1970s but no longer. So the left is searching for a new strategy, albeit within the framework of the socialist-liberal compromise. In briefest form, those who want to strengthen the liberal aspects of the compromise usually talk about a third way; those who want to defend its socialist aspects insist on speaking of social democracy.

Mundane if complex electoral considerations are also at play. On one hand, parties of the left have nurtured on their own behalf a thick web of interests and expectations. This makes sharp changes away from traditional social democratic policies costly and painful. On the other hand, social and economic changes give rise to new demands. The old policies cannot respond to them. This works to the right's benefit; and the right goes to elections calling for change as the left once did. All this compels the left to address what it stands for in advanced, postindustrial societies. It is only after analyzing this new world in

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depth that we can ask whether a third way is meaningful. It may be more useful to distinguish the "lib-lab" (that is, the "Liberal-Labour" or Keynes-Beveridge) phase of liberal-socialist compromise from today's, and then take a further step that might be called a "lib-lib-lab" mixture (rather than a third way). I have heard little from political leaders of the "Third Way International" (Blair, Clinton, and Brazilian president Fernando Henrique Cardoso) that strays far beyond the main historical traditions of the left.

Some third way theorists do pay attention to the sort of environmental and feminist concerns that were often marginal for liberal and social democratic programs. But this is rarely repeated with intensity in the electoral platforms and policies of third way leaders. In fact, such concerns show up instead in the program of social democratic parties—especially Nordic ones—that would never identify with today's "third ways." In any event, a stress on such themes hardly suffices to make the third way something beyond a rearrangement of items already within the Whig and socialist traditions of the left. "Lib-lib-lab" is a superficial and perhaps a bit abusive term, but until "third-wayers" prove that they have come up with something quite new, it is as good as any other.

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The Need for Balance

Like "third-way" theorists, I believe that there have been profound changes that fundamentally affect the situation of the left. The obvious conclusion is that new strategies are indeed needed. Fortunately, the left has grown to appreciate anew the liberal democratic tradition. I wish the same were so when it comes to gender and environmental issues and global systemic risks. But what the left most needs is balanced judgment. It is easy to underestimate and it is easy to overestimate the nature, size, and novelty of the changes we have been witnessing. Globalization and the technological revolution are very real, yet talk about them is often ideological or even nonsensical. The same is so when it comes to changes in demography, labor markets, and welfare provision. Still, the failures of the old socialist traditions (both Marxist and non-Marxist) should be fully recognized. This should not lead to an embrace of monetarist or neoclassical views of the market. Accepting the market economy—and even appreciating its positive contribution to innovation, growth, and liberty—should not blind us from the fact that capitalism is still a pretty rough beast. Socialists and liberals alike sought to tame it for very good reasons. The reaction against Marxism these days has gone a bit too far. As a toolbox (not as an ideology) Marxism can still produce precious insights on the working and nature of market economies. Again, the left's thinking needs balance. We need to avoid opportunistic and unprincipled versions of "old" social democratic policies but also equally opportunistic and unprincipled versions of "new," third-way strategies. ●

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The Search for a French Way

Joël Roman

With most European countries run by parties that identify themselves as social democratic or socialist, the French left faces a dual challenge: establishing sufficient cooperation with its neighbors in order to shape general European policies, and producing a blueprint for reform, a third way, as Tony Blair and Gerhard Schröder might call it. This will require a true intellectual revolution in the French left, and its heritage will have to be subjected to critical scrutiny and redefinition. Vague references to greater democracy or social justice will not suffice. These must come with concrete proposals to design the contemporary social landscape.

Almost two years have passed since the Socialist Party's victory in the National Assembly elections, and Lionel Jospin's government may be proud of a number of accomplishments: several inegalitarian initiatives of the previous government have been foiled; the number of hours in the working week has been reduced; draft legislation has been presented that allows for rights for homosexual couples; reforms have been advanced in the field of social security; reform has begun in the judicial system; European development has been pushed toward more consideration of social issues. Above all there is a renewed confidence in what can be done in the political arena. However, these are all isolated achievements, and don't compose a coherent project or model. Here the French left is stymied by three handicaps.

First, there is the legacy of François Mitterrand. His administration's old guard still burdens the present. Scandals are part of the story. For instance, Roland Dumas, Mitterrand's ex-foreign secretary and current president of France's Constitutional Council, has been accused of influence peddling. But beyond such individual behavior, it is the opportunism of the Mitterrand years that discredited his policies. Too often, those policies seemed as if they were masquerades, that they concealed dubious practices and cynical political conduct. Jospin has called on fellow socialists to take stock of the late president's legacy. As prime minister, Jospin's behavior contrasts markedly with Mitterrand's, but the left is far from conducting a full self-examination.

The left's second handicap is also a product of the Mitterrand years. In the name of pragmatism, Mitterrand's politics actually undermined pragmatism. Respect for fact became resigned realism; acceptance of markets became veneration of wealth and success; promises that political life would be increasingly democratized have dissipated, and there is increased inequality instead. The danger today is that the left will now join a critique of Mitterrand to a revival of old, indeed passé, revolutionary beliefs. Among Trotskyist groups, in the French Communist Party (PCF), and within the Socialist Party itself, archaic rhetoric has resurfaced that feeds upon contemporary social problems. So a dogmatic and didactic left, which is pessimistic and hostile to any sort of modern self-reform, persists. It is vocal in public debates, but contents itself with denunciations of capitalism and globalization while presenting few if any programmatic ideas.

This sort of politics accords with another branch of France's left-wing tradition, and brings us to the third handicap: the way in which some on the left have appropriated French republicanism and given it new life by seeking to reestablish the cult of the State and to mobilize a highly nationalistic public-spiritedness. The roots, here, are

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partly Jacobin, combining political centralization with hostility to European unity and immigration. This left is represented within the current government by Interior Minister Jean-Pierre Chevènement and really offers nothing to efforts to find a new direction for the left.

This triple handicap prevents the French left from evolving fully into a modern and reformist—revitalized—left. In practice, the left has changed to some extent but lacks a theoretical basis. The consequences include lots of hesitations, and—paradoxically—too many concessions to the free-trade dogmas.

A balance is lacking. Nevertheless, some recent developments may be cause for encouragement. Under pressure from the CFDT, now the country's foremost union, French labor is taking an increasingly salutary role in social policy. Whether it is a matter of welfare or retirement benefits, reform or the reduction of the working week, the CFDT has been shrewd as a negotiator and has fashioned a coherent perspective based on resistance to corporatism and advocacy of mutualism. This has had a positive effect on other unions, including the UNSA (a group of autonomous unions, mostly of public servants) and even the CGT, long a communist bastion, which recently took a new turn away from its past politics, which were chiefly those of protest. True, French unions are still relatively weak (and carry little weight within the Socialist Party). Yet they may be able to open up new areas of action and participation appropriate to new times. For instance, the successful negotiations for a thirty-five-hour working week may have created less employment than expected, but it made it necessary to redefine both social relationships and workplace organization in ways more favorable to employees, in small as well as large enterprises.

A second positive factor—one with great importance for the entire European left but especially for social democrats speaking of a third way—is European integration and the increasing political convergence among Germany, Great Britain, France, and Italy. A novel situation is emerging, notably within the launching of the Euro. "Europe" is becoming more tangible, and European elections later this spring will accelerate debates about what the left means today. The choice by French Greens of Daniel Cohn-Bendit, leader of the May '68 movement and later a pillar of the "realist" branch of the German Greens, to head their own list, will catalyze a wide-ranging discussion.

The third ground for hope is the general maturation of French society. For a long time it seemed frozen, stuck in its own style of inflexible corporatism and chary of change. However, polls show a new confidence among the French, indicating a readiness to move on and to consider new social possibilities. Of course, there is resistance within sectors fearful that they have something to lose—ranging from teachers and doctors to producers of pork or public transport workers. Still, many, even in their ranks, are becoming convinced that they dare not put their heads in the sand. True, some of them believe, like the old "leopard" of Lampedusa's novel, "Everything will have to change if we want things to remain as they are." But it is up to the French left to give the lie to these words. ●

Translated from the French by Suzanne Lapstun.

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Stranger in His Own House

A Reply to Phillip Richards

Martin Kilson

THE 1970S to 1990s era has witnessed a new archaeology of the African-American intelligentsia. This has involved a steady growth of conservatism among black intellectuals and, more recently, some ideological differentiation within conservative ranks. The early set of conservative black intellectuals can be called "hard-core" or "true believer" conservatives, for they cherish laissez-faire American capitalism, while the newer set can be called "soft-core" or "ambivalent" conservatives, for, while they are enamored of American capitalism, they hesitate to give it a full love-embrace, so to speak. Prominent personalities among the hard-core set include Thomas Sowell, Shelby Steele, Alan Keyes, Walter Williams, and Glenn Loury (though Professor Loury has for two years or so now been recasting himself into a pro-active, liberal conservative). The soft-core set includes Hilton Als, Randall Kennedy, Henry Louis Gates, K.A. Appiah, Daryl Michael Scott, and Gerald Early.

Although hard-core conservatives believe in a natural or automatic capacity of American capitalism to correct its century-and-a-half racist marginalization of African-American citizens, the soft-core conservatives specialize in criticizing mainline African-American intelligentsia and institutions. A recent addition to the soft core is Phillip Richards, as demonstrated most recently in his *Dissent* article "A Stranger in the Village: Coming of Age in a White College" (Summer 1998).

Black Cultural Activism

At the core of "A Stranger in the Village" is Richards's antipathy to black cultural activism, an antipathy that he packages curiously or not quite candidly, for he never tells his readers that the "Village" where blackness is so very distressful to him is Colgate University, where he is an associate professor in the English department. The story line of his article is his personal tale of a decade of dissatisfaction with what he views as Colgate's culturally alienated African-American students:

> At my first [black studies] faculty party, the black studies department was explained to me as the embodiment of the black students' worldview. For some reason, I fell foul of this apparently shared understanding early on. At the time, the majority of African-American students I encountered were taken up with the Afrocentric study of black religions. And I must—my memory is not clear on this—not have fully approved of some of the extravagant interpretations that I was hearing of Langston Hughes's blues poetry in my African-American literature class. Groups of estranged minorities are often close-knit and sectarian at places such as this. Thereafter, the black students dropped me.

Richards proceeds to compare Colgate's black students to its white ones.

> And in the leisure afforded by their [black students'] absence [from my classes], I had time to write and to work with a series of excellent white students who, perhaps predictably, went on to excellent graduate or professional schools. For better or worse, my experience has plunged me into the white academic culture of the school. Most of my students, even in the advanced African-American literature seminars, were white. They were often better students of black literature than African Americans because of their self-consciously cultivated ability to detach themselves from a text and to analyze it. They brought to my classes a variant of the white academic culture that gives the school its [elite] reputation. They came to Ralph Ellison and Richard

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Wright without the crippling feelings of alienation, inevitably experienced by an outsider in a closely knit community [like Colgate University].

CLEARLY, Richards relishes the core precepts of Bookerite accommodationism. One such precept is that African Americans should let go of their anger about their dehumanizing experiences under America's two centuries of racism, because it distorts their career opportunities. But for me what is worse is that Richard assumes that African Americans in general are not as pragmatic in articulating and choreographing their anger as white groups such as Irish Americans, Jewish Americans, and Italian Americans have been. Lacking this pragmatism, Richards believes, African Americans require a hand to guide them in their dealings with white American institutions. For Richards, no doubt, elitist and conservative white guiding hands are preferable.

So Richards offers African Americans an updated version of the accommodationist conservatism of Booker Washington. To wit: trust in the natural workings of the democratic ethos enshrined at the core of our American Republic and reject the challenge to white racism fashioned by the founders of black national consciousness at the dawn of the modern era—Alexander Crummell, Martin Delaney, W.E.B. Du Bois, Anna Julia Cooper, Ida Wells Barnett, and James Weldon Johnson.

Richards elaborates by relating tales of everyday life at Colgate. These strike me as strained and forced; he lacks the storytelling felicity that instinctively attracts and convinces. Be this as it may, he tells his *Dissent* readers that the alienation exhibited by most African-American students at Colgate has little to do with Colgate's white realities and everything to do with Colgate's black realities. Above all, because affirmative action practices enabled a sizeable number of black students to enter Colgate University with "[lower] social class [attributes] and test scores," white students and faculty inevitably look down upon and become prejudiced toward black students, who in turn "appropriate a deeply consensual image of blackness."

Blaming the Victim

Richards's way of packaging his tales of everyday life in black-white relations at his "white" college doesn't make it easy for his *Dissent* readers to understand the development of black students' alienation. For example, at one point Richards tell us: "The climate of this college encourages black students to see the meaning of their blackness as estrangement from upper-class American life." Now what precisely does this mean in terms of the origins of black alienation at Colgate? Is Richards charging that the racist realities at Colgate sparked estrangment among black students? If this is his claim, he could have put it more directly. Is he charging that Colgate's black students obsessively, neurotically immerse themselves in an activist cultural style as a way to mask their individual and group insecurity complex, a complex stemming in part from their dependence upon affirmative action?

I believe that Richards wants to tell his *Dissent* readers that African-American students are themselves to blame for their alienation from the everyday life of Colgate. The tenacious neoracism that prevails throughout post–civil rights era American society—reinforced everywhere by broad classism—is of little moment in his thinking. In his view, Colgate's black students cannot complain if white students have rekindled pre-Civil Rights era prejudices. In this variant of blaming the victim, Richards claims that "blackness . . . appeals to white racist prejudice [at Colgate]," and that it justifies a "political apartheid" that in turn reinforces the maladjustment of Colgate's black students as Richards views it.

Richards's tales of everyday life in race relations at Colgate exhibit a kind of "I've-made-a-big-discovery" tone. And what's the big discovery? That there is an intrinsic malfunction in black cultural activism—namely, the inability of its adherents to adapt to the processes of secular achievement (in science and technology, humanities and aesthetics, and so on) at the foundation of modern Western civilization. In short, that black cultural assertion is an obstacle to social achievement. Lacking the space for elaboration, just let me state baldly that this claim is absurd. Moreover, neither Richards nor his

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white conservative confreres would dare articulate this view vis-a-vis cultural activism among white ethnic and religious groups. Is Jewish cultural activism as such dysfunctional to social achievement? Are Irish, Italian, Polish, and WASP cultural activist patterns similarly dysfunctional?

Long before Richards's *Dissent* essay, progressive African-American intellectuals drew attention to the need for pragmatic choreographing of black cultural activism so that social achievement is respected. During the formative era of black activism on white campuses (the mid-sixties to mid-seventies), progesssive black intellectuals who challenged militant black students in this regard included Kenneth B. Clark (at Brooklyn College), Hylan Lewis (at Brooklyn College), W. Arthur Lews (at Princeton University), Harold Weaver (at Rutgers University), John Hope Franklin (at University of Chicago), John Blassingame (at Yale University), Nathan Huggins (at Columbia University), Charles Hamilton (at Columbia University), St. Clair Drake (at Stanford University), and myself at Harvard University, to mention just a few.

But unlike Richards's essentially rejectionist demeanor toward cultural activism among black Colgate students today, these progressive intellectuals exhibited basic respect for black folks, for blackness. They recognized that an activist commitment to black culture can be realized along pragmatic, rational-secular, and culturally tolerant—that is, non-xenophobic—lines, just like activist commitment to Jewishness, Irishness, Italianness, Anglo-Saxonness, and so on. This is in contrast to Richards's neo-accommodationist discourse, which posits the generic inability of black cultural activist patterns to be anything other than irrational, culturally intolerant, and xenophobic.

During the formative days of black students' ethnic activism on white campuses, I was one of the progressive African-American faculty who got involved pro-actively. That is, I endeavored to help African-American students sort out their black cultural or ethnic activism along pragmatic and progressive lines. And despite some real intellectual disagreements—which I always preferred to be candid about—I sustained close mentoring ties with many of the militant black activists at Harvard in the mid-sixties to mid-seventies. When intellectual differences didn't interfere, I was faculty adviser to the black students' association. I helped to organize and finance one of the earliest black student journals on a white campus, and I sustained close friendships with activist black students.

So in that formative phase, progressive black faculty at white institutions did two crucial things. First, we impressed upon activist black students the need to infuse one's commitment to blackness with a spirit of cosmopolitan humanism, so that one is able to guard against chauvinistic and mean-spirited forms of ethnic activism. Second, we emphasized that African-American students had an obligation toward a kind of dual fidelity: fidelity to modernist achievement and rigorous academic behavior, on the one hand, and to black folks' honor—to the best traditions of black culture—on the other.

In pursuit of these goals, progressive black faculty at white institutions did not hesitate to chastise black students when their cultural activism turned extremist or mean, small-minded, and twisted. But we also let them know one thing clearly. Namely, that we respected them—even while we also insisted they come to grips with the need for a pragmatic mode of managing black activism within the modern achievement-oriented society.

It is here, then, that Richards's "A Stranger in the Village" looms as intellectually inauthentic. Which is to say, it is little more than an exercise in blackness-phobia. Curiously enough, at one point Richards pretends that his response to Colgate's black students today is similar to the response of progressive black faculty during the 1960s and 1970s. But *Dissent* readers should not take this bid seriously, because it is simply groundless. (I have written about the era of formative black student cultural activism at Harvard. See Werner Sollors et al., eds. *Blacks at Harvard: A Documentary History of African-American Experience at Harvard and Radcliffe* [New York University Press, 1993].)

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FINALLY, Richards gilds the lily when he writes about the only African-American student at Colgate whom he considered on an intellectual par with Colgate's white students. Richards tells his readers that he first encountered this student—a black female—"in my American literature survey class. Her presence there meant that she paid little attention to the black [cultural activist] diatribe against my courses." Although this student did share outward solidarity with black cultural activists (for example, she wore "the striped knit caps that were common to the West Indian cultural nationalists in the college"), Richards informs us that "her resemblance to them ended there." As he puts it: "For when she opened her mouth to comment on Cotton Mather, Jonathan Edwards, or Ralph Waldo Emerson, she spoke in the high analytic mode that one expects from a senior philosophy major in . . . this school. . . . Her literary insights and analytic prowess stunned not only me but also the white fraternity boys. . . ."

Although I am aware that Richards is a cogent American studies scholar, I was not at all aware that Greek letter fraternity white males as a group possessed special talents in this field, talents that would encourage Richards to use them as measuring rod. But Richards reports that he had a second reason—more important to him, it seems, than the first—for his attraction to this student. "She did not see herself as black, and attributed her academic success partially to this view. . . . In her intellectual excellence and her quirky individualism this student represented a very impressive *protest against the college's [black students'] debilitating ideology of blackness.*" (Emphasis added.)

Richards elevates his high-achieving black student's rejection of her blackness to a general cultural principle. Furthermore, he informs his readers of another of this student's key attributes—that she is not of domestic black origins, but of immigrant black origins, a Caribbean black American. In Richards's curious discourse, immigrant origin guarantees that black students on white campuses—or even at black colleges, for that matter—will "reject the consensual black ideology."

In the passages where he's celebrating his favorite student, Richards informs his readers that if there are other intellectually rigorous black students at Colgate, they're more likely than not to be immigrant in background too. Here he is pandering to the pernicious propaganda line common among white conservatives: that immigrant blacks possess some intrinsic intellectual gifts not common among domestic blacks. There are no serious data that Richards or any other conservative can adduce to sustain this rubbish.

But never mind. It is, I submit, patently clear from Richards's article that his thinking about and behavior toward African-American students at Colgate is devoid of simple respect for the parity of black with white culture. No doubt this explains, at least in part, his curious bid to conceal the actual university where, during the past decade as a black American assistant professor in literary studies, he has considered himself "A Stranger in the Village." But his estrangement is not from the white realities of Colgate, with their tenacious neoracist patterns: these are realities that Richards has easily accommodated to. It is rather an estrangement from the black realities of Colgate—realities that Richards considers maladjusted to the high-knowledge milieu of the university. ●

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Phillip Richards Replies

THERE IS not space enough to answer all of Martin Kilson's characterizations of myself and my essay. Some of these go to the heart of the question as to why I wrote the essay itself. Let me say in this regard that the integration of elite universities in the late twentieth century is an important part of the democratization of American institutions. That in and of itself would make the observation of black students on white campuses of historical as well as topical interest. In this connection the perceptions of black faculty and students are very important to the record. The various meanings of integration in American society will be debated for some time. And the desegregation of schools will be one site where that debate will be most intense.

In other respects, it is probably more useful to discuss the considerable area of my agreement with Kilson. I subscribe to the principle that black faculty ought to inspire cosmopolitan humanism and a fidelity to high academic standards among their black students. I attempted to write my article in the spirit of that view. ●

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Of Private Vice and Public Virtue

Murray Hausknecht

As THE Lewinsky scandal unfolded, the *New York Times* was chronicling how New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani was straying from the straight and narrow path of political morality. The mayor's actions deserve more attention than they have attracted, because, though less titillating, they raise the same questions of character and morality and are more consequential for the integrity of a political democracy than the president's misbehavior. Despite all the blather about how Clinton has damaged "family values," Giuliani is the more subversive figure.

The Giuliani story begins, curiously enough, with a *Times* report from Beijing. On September 9,1998, Joan Robinson, the United Nations Human Rights Commissioner, was to deliver a speech at the Beijing Hilton on "democracy and freedom." Chu Hailan, the wife of an imprisoned dissident, was waiting in the lobby to speak to her on behalf of her husband. But before she had a chance to approach the commissioner she was grabbed by police and security guards who "bundled her, screaming through the lobby" to a police station. Later a Foreign Ministry spokesman stated, "Security guards removed a woman from the entrance of the Hilton Hotel because she was disturbing order at the hotel."

About a month before the Beijing incident Khallid Abdul Muhammad, a former aide to Louis Farrakhan, applied for a permit to hold the Million Youth March in Harlem during the Labor Day weekend. Giuliani, denouncing Muhammad's anti-Semitism and racism, refused a permit for a Harlem site and proposed that the rally be held either on Randalls Island underneath the Triborough Bridge or Van Cortlandt Park in the northern reaches of the Bronx. Neither place is easily accessible from Harlem or, for that matter, any other place in the city. Eventually, as a result of a court order, a permit was issued allowing the rally in Harlem from noon to 4:00 p.m. Promptly at four, just as Muhammad was finishing his speech, "a phalanx of officers in riot helmets" stormed the speaker's platform as a police helicopter swooped down over the crowd. The mayor's first explanation of the police action was that they had "moved in to enforce a strict timetable" calling for the four o'clock ending. Later he and Police Commissioner Howard Safir claimed that the police moved only after they were pelted by bricks, bottles, and other debris. At a press conference on September 9, the same day Chu Hailan was dragged from the Beijing Hilton for "disturbing order," Safir explained "that a hate monger who came here to cause trouble was not allowed to do that, and the citizens of this city were protected from people who wanted a riot and did not have one."

Giuliani's refusal to issue the Million Youth March permit was not an isolated event; it was one of a series of denials of parade permits. In the preceding January a series of delays in issuing a permit to the Million Marijuana March Organization for a May parade up Fifth Avenue forced a cancellation of the event. In March the Coalition Against Police Brutality requested permission for a parade, but the request was denied the day before the planned date of the event. In September the October 22 Coalition asked for a parade permit so that it could participate in a nationwide protest against police brutality. The city denied the permit a week before the scheduled date on the grounds that it would interfere with traffic, although that same month traffic was banned from Wall Street to City Hall for the Yankees' victory parade. As a result of a fed-

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eral court order the parade took place "[h]emmed in by a throng of police on foot and on scooters." Giuliani, a former U.S. attorney who had prosecuted Wall Street white-collar criminals, called the court "an imperial Federal Court" and accused federal judges of thinking "that they are put there by God."

In mid-August the police department embarked on Operation Bravo to counter possible terrorist attacks. City Hall was surrounded with concrete barriers and news conferences typically held on its steps were banned. The steps, however, were the scene of the final ceremonies of the Yankees' parade. Almost immediately after that parade an AIDS organization, Housing Works, requested permission for a parade and use of the steps to commemorate World AIDS Day. After a month's delay permission was denied, and written guidelines for City Hall security were issued "that justified the city's use of the property for certain extraordinary events, including celebration of military triumphs, local sports teams and space exploration." The following week the City Hall steps were again used as part of the parade for the John Glenn space mission, which again blocked traffic from Wall Street to City Hall. Housing Works successfully sued the city, and on December 1 fewer than two hundred demonstrators gathered in front of City Hall "where they were confronted by metal detectors and a phalanx of police officers and corralled behind steel barricades" with a police helicopter hovering above them. Reporters and television cameras were also herded into a barricaded pen.

Chu Hailan and the American protesters live in vastly different social and political worlds; the end she seeks is also different from their ends and there are obvious differences between a Khallid Abdul Muhammad and the other American protesters. All of them, nonetheless, have one thing in common: they are trouble makers, people who in the eyes of authority are actual or potential disturbers of "order." That term has many overlapping connotations. In one sense order means predictable or routine action as in the "orderly procedures" of a bureaucracy. Closely related to this sense is order as law-abiding behavior and the respect for authority that are absent in a "disorderly classroom." Entangled in both these connotations is order as a "command" and the expectation of obedience. Still another meaning is found in the usage "social order," with its connotations of "structure," "hierarchy," and "stability." All of these meanings come into play in the responses to trouble makers.

Recall the accusation against Chu Hailan: "she was disturbing order at the hotel." This is not much different from asserting that the police in Harlem were protecting citizens from "a hate monger who came here to cause trouble." In all societies, whether democratic or highly authoritarian ones like China, officials and the police are responsible for controlling "disorderly conduct" or maintaining peaceful, law-abiding behavior. It is not surprising, therefore, that in both Beijing and New York the initial impulse of the authorities is to identify and guard against possible disturbers of the peace; that's what police are for. But the similarities go deeper.

As Tiananmen Square demonstrated, any public protest in China is, by definition, a threat to social order. It is easy to see that the accusation of "disturbing order" implicitly contains the more serious charge that Chu Hailan was endangering the existing social and political structure. The same subtext is not too hard to discern in the case of the Million Youth March and its leader. Muhammad's antidemocratic ideology clearly justifies Giuliani's denunciation of him. But the purpose of the rally was to mobilize and encourage political action; it was a challenge to the existing discriminatory social structure. By attempting to contain the rally at, literally, the margins of the city, Giuliani, intentionally or not, was protecting the existing social order. Less obviously, perhaps, the same challenge to the existing order was present in the other demonstrations. Public protests of police brutality and demands for the use of City Hall steps when they are forbidden question the power of the authorities and the legitimacy of their orders, and prohibiting the demonstrations is even more effective than marginalizing them on an island in the middle of the East River or in the Bronx. Interestingly, in his crusade against sex shops

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Giuliani has tried to push those establishments to "remote, city-sanctioned zones" on the city's waterfront and industrial areas. Political protest, like pornography, must be kept far from susceptible publics. They may gather in easily accessible spaces only for "celebration[s] of military triumphs, local sports teams and space exploration."

Guidelines like these are routinely and strictly enforced in authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. In democracies the problem of maintaining order is more difficult. Any large public gathering, whether a large crowd at the scene of an accident, a political protest, or a St. Patrick's Day parade, contains the seeds of possible "disorderly conduct," and a political protest like the Harlem rally increases the chances for disorder. The problem democratic authorities face is that the rights of free speech and assembly oblige them to permit political action challenging the social order and their own legitimacy—action which at the same time creates the conditions for "disorderly conduct." It may be argued, further, that officials are obliged to make it easy for political gatherings of all sorts to take place. Free speech and assembly are rights designed to promote the widest possible participation in a society's political life, and it is, therefore, the duty of public officials to facilitate access to the public arena. Few officials, of course, ease the way for political protesters, but those who do are exemplars of public virtue.

IT IS NOT difficult to pinpoint private immorality; lying about "inappropriate behavior" is a good example. But what is the morality or public virtue we expect of officials in the course of carrying out their duties? There are, of course, the easy instances—the selling of offices, acceptance of bribes—that are prohibited by law. But Giuliani represents a more difficult case. Although political protesters have had to take him to court, his refusals to issue permits were not crimes. On the other hand, he has attempted to use the powers of his office to prohibit legitimate political protest and assailed the judges who have called him to account. Public virtue consists of more than passively meeting the legal obligations of office; in democracies the virtuous official protects the freedom of citizens and attempts to extend the rights of free speech and assembly to the widest possible degree. It is perhaps too much to expect elected officials to actively help opponents who question their legitimacy and oppose their policies, but a critical test of political virtue occurs when promoters of antidemocratic ideologies or protesters of police brutality attempt to exercise their rights. Giuliani clearly failed this test.

Although no one hesitates to label Clinton's "inappropriate behavior" as "immoral," no one speaks of Giuliani's actions in terms of morality or as a failure of "character." His attempts to block political protests are more subversive of a democratic order than Clinton's sexual behavior, but no one claims that he is thereby unfit for public office.

One obvious reason why is that almost everyone agrees that some conduct is immoral, for example, marital infidelity, even though there are no great expectations that everyone will observe the norms governing sexual behavior. (These low expectations may explain the lack of "outrage" over Clinton's behavior.) The same low expectations influence moral evaluations of official conduct. The legacy of the history of American politics is an electorate that considers itself ahead of the game if its officials steer clear of "corrupt practices," such as taking bribes or soliciting kickbacks. That is to say, public virtue merely consists of avoiding criminal acts. More significantly, officials like Giuliani also benefit from the public's ambivalence about some kinds of positive action.

In his election campaigns Giuliani has played upon fears of crime and the need to improve the "quality of life." One of his first acts on taking office was ordering the police to crack down on the squeegee men who, without asking, cleaned the windshields of stopped cars and then solicited a tip. Though few of them were menacing figures, they were a distinct annoyance and part of a generalized anxiety about crime. The squeegee men are on the same continuum of fear with demagogues like Khallid Abdul Muhammad whose anti-Semitic and anti-white rantings arouse the same anxieties. In addition to the fear of crime, there are the prejudiced perceptions of the people involved: the squeegee men who are among

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the undeserving poor; blacks; people attacking the police who are protecting us from criminals; and homosexuals. The fear of crime, the unsympathetic people he targets—"trouble-makers" all—and his desire to improve the quality of life lead to approval rather than condemnation of Giuliani's actions. When official policies target the sources of public fears and anxieties, questions about political virtue seem either irrelevant or a threat to public safety.

Yet it is the public morality of officials rather than their private vices that is the pertinent issue. Private sexual encounters, even if conducted in the Oval Office, do no damage to democracy; the mayor who would deny protesters their rights undermines the political order. Focusing on the sexual peccadillos of politicians rather than their official conduct deflects attention from the real question of morality and politics: what are the moral standards that should govern behavior in public office. There are, of course, no easy answers, but the difficulties should not obscure the pertinence of the problem. ●

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Cynthia Fuchs Epstein

The Part-time Solution and the Part-time Problem

SOLUTIONS TO problems often carry unanticipated consequences. This is the case with part-time work in America today. Part-time work can be a reasonable way of dealing with the work-family dilemma. It has been discussed widely in the press, among corporate managers and working people. Clearly, flexible work schedules meet the needs of many dual-career couples.

As the United Parcel Service strike in 1997 made clear, many American workers settle for part-time employment when their preference would be for full time and the steadier incomes and benefits that come with it. But part-time work is also voluntarily chosen by millions of people—the young who need to combine work with school; older workers who want to keep their hand in the workplace but also to cut back; and workers who have children at home they need to care for.

The vast majority of part-time workers are women. Although both feminists and conservatives defend part-time work as a way for *parents* to hold a job and also spend adequate time with their children, it is no mystery that they are talking about mothers. Part-time work is clearly gendered.

What do we mean by part-time work anyway? As with all concepts of time, it depends on the context. The Department of Labor defines part time as anything less than a "normal" thirty-five-hour week, which puts people who work thirty-four hours a week in offices in the same category with those who work fifteen hours a week at McDonald's. And, as the *New York Times* put it recently, a new class of part-time professionals and managers—mostly women—are working "reduced" schedules that run thirty-five to forty hours a week.

A group of us at the City University of New York Graduate Center have just completed a study of lawyers who work reduced schedules. These include part-timers who may put in thirty-hour weeks in government offices or fifty-hour weeks in firms where the norm is sixty or seventy hours. The latter have chosen schedules that set firm limits on the escalating time requirements that come from pressure to increase their "billable hours"—the hours that firms charge to clients. The in-

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crease in hours demanded of lawyers in large firms has set a standard for the profession that affects all lawyers with whom the firms deal. These workaholic standards are getting more common in corporate managerial ranks too.

Working in the law, like working in other spheres today, means facing a set of mounting pressures that stem from the frantic pace of a world in which cell phones, e-mail and faxes, overnight couriers, and air travel have created a twenty-four-hour work day. Globalization and competition contribute to the sense of urgency in raising productivity (while keeping the workforce to a minimum). The result is that busy executives, lawyers, money managers, and the myriads of people that support and serve them are feeling high degrees of stress. Today, professionals and factory workers bend mind and body to rhythms created by the demands of global markets and intense competition at home. More and more people are working weekends, holidays, and during hours that others define as leisure time. Increasingly, support personnel such as secretaries and data processing clerks have to work at times highly uncongenial to family life, while professionals often have no off-time at all, no matter how unsynchronized their schedules might be with those of family and friends.

THE INCREASE in time pressures in the professions and among executives comes at a time when women are flocking into professional and managerial ranks, finally having gained access to career options that men have long enjoyed. Yet given the persistence of gender stereotypes, these women must negotiate the conflict between the two thousand to three thousand "billable hours" that define a young lawyer as a real "comer," or the after-hours work demanded of managers, and the rising expectations of "intensive mothering" that the sociologist Sharon Hays has identified as a feature of contemporary American culture. Working mothers, whether full time or part time, still get a bad rap, as media sensationalists and pop psychologists warn them of "killer nannies" or stress the dangers of failed mother-child bonding. Yet most women with children are in the workforce.

The combination of demographic changes, the pool of talented women, and the needs of the professions—alongside the women's movement's pressure to seek institutional solutions for work-family conflicts—have motivated corporations and law firms to make part-time work available. Yet not many individuals take it—fewer than 3 percent of lawyers, for example. This is because part-time work, whether of many or few hours, carries serious costs; with few exceptions, it is women who pay them.

Think of time as a political category: Who controls it? Who defines the time of any activity as enough or too much? To what extent are we masters of our time or slaves to others' dicta about it?

Even among trained professionals, long defined as "free" because they presumably hold control of how they spend their time, the demands of the market have overwhelmed their autonomy. In the deal-making environment of Wall Street, long hours are rewarded with high incomes and bonuses. Deal makers are requiring undivided time commitments. They administer "greedy institutions"—as the sociologist Lewis Coser once described organizations that demand total commitment from their members. Able individuals who work productively on the job but are seen as wanting a life of their own face serious sanctions. Even if these professionals agree to be paid disproportionately less money, they find themselves forced "off track" in their careers—it doesn't matter that the reduced schedule is often temporary. More than this the quality as well as the quantity of their work is put into question.

The findings of our study of lawyers revealed that individuals who worked what most people would regard as a normal work week—but less than the workaholic time standard of their firm—were stigmatized in both trivial and profound ways. Experienced lawyers who had previously proven themselves now were marginalized. Managers refused to give them titles appropriate to their seniority. Some were refused business cards with the firms' name, and important meetings were often scheduled on days when they regularly work from home. Many of them lost their seniority in times of retrenchment or were fired.

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We determined that many part-time lawyers must either abandon their "solution" and return to full-time work or find themselves in career limbo. Even those who worked flexible hours—using modern technology to work in home offices, for example—suffered by not engaging in "face time" with their colleagues. It turns out that it is not simply the number of hours that is crucial in defining the "real professional" but also the visibility of working late in the day and night and on weekends. Out of sight often meant "out of mind" when it came to placing an associate on a partnership track.

At a meeting I attended last year, called to address growing dissatisfaction among young lawyers, and attended by managing partners of large firms and deans of major law schools, there was a sharp discrepancy in the urgency expressed by the partners and the deans. Top-flight lawyers saw the time problem as a "lifestyle" or a "woman's issue." They lamented the loss of women's talent from the top rungs of the profession, but didn't think it was their responsibility. They also clearly did not believe that young men starting families should enter into the "lifestyle" debate and share responsibility with their working wives. "Real men," in their view, don't work part time and don't work at home.

In spite of these problems, many women hope to work part time. And, for the first time, many organizations formally permit it. The women, given the poor facilities for child care in this country, and the pressures on them to make minimal use of surrogate care, believe that they must make compromises. And many organizations find that they benefit from the contributions of women professionals who deliver excellent work and do not feel justified in making large demands.

BUT SO FAR, many of the available "solutions" are individual ones. Most of the women professionals who have negotiated part-time arrangements are married to men who work full time. Part time is usually not possible for a single mother or a minority lawyer who needs a full-time salary. Voluntary part-time professional work turns out to be a middle-class white woman's option.

Either consciously or unconsciously, organizations put a cap on the careers and numbers of part-timers. Because time norms define the professional, alternative schedules mark the person demanding or accepting them as less than professional. More women than men are "time deviants," and this fact adds strength to the notion that women are generally less professional. Part time has become a woman's option and thus has been defined as a "woman's issue," leaving the workaholic model a male model that many men do not care for, but get sucked into.

The continuing stereotyping of women's roles and women's character, the pressure on them to bear all the responsibility for home and child care, and the denigration they face when they try to juggle their roles, effectively limit their ability to break through glass ceilings. Although the issue of workplace flexibility is commonly couched in economic terms, it is clear that the meaning of time and the economics of work are often socially constructed to maintain old stratification patterns.

To achieve a more equitable workplace, there has to be serious institutional planning to enable working people at every level of the occupational hierarchy to find meaningful work and opportunities for career growth, while also having sufficient "off time" to devote to family and civic duties. This should not be imagined as a "woman's issue," or a "deviant" career path but as part of the normal pace of the life cycle for everyone. It is doubtful that productivity would suffer. The returns in commitment and excellence would far outweigh the inconveniences that industrial and professional managers anticipate. ●

CYNTHIA FUCHS EPSTEIN's most recent book (with Carroll Seron, Bonnie Oglensky, and Robert Sauté) is *The Part-Time Paradox: Time Norms, Professional Life, Family and Gender* (Routledge, 1998).

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In *Transition*

John Palattella

When *Transition* 51 appeared in 1991, its editors could not have expected many readers to be acquainted with the magazine. Not only had its editorial offices migrated from East Africa to the northeastern United States, but it was emerging from a fifteen-year hiatus. The magazine faced a fresh generation of readers who knew of it only through patchy collections of back issues—if they knew of it at all. There was also the matter of its contents. Two Harvard professors, Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., edited the new *Transition*, and a university press, Oxford, published it, but it certainly didn't read like the typical academic journal circa 1991, when Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault were still the rage. Where was the jargon, and where were the theoretical fads and the prima donnas? Where, for that matter, were the footnotes?

To lend readers some guidance, *Transition* 51 offered two points of orientation. One was "Beyond the Berlin Wall," an unvarnished account of postcolonial Africa by Wole Soyinka, chair of *Transition*'s editorial board. (Soyinka edited the magazine from 1973 to 1976, the last years of its first incarnation.) Emboldened by the release of Nelson Mandela, Soyinka condemns the ideological self-righteousness that has animated the continent's dictators during the last thirty years and tarnished the efforts of democratic-minded politicians. Soyinka doesn't exactly roll out the red carpet for left intellectuals, either. Of course they can aid freedom struggles like Mandela's, he insists, but only after purging themselves of a bitter legacy—"excusing, ignoring, or even justifying leadership atrocities and betrayals, simply because they are of the 'Left.'"

The second point of orientation was an essay by Charles Sugnet about the literary magazine *Granta*. Soyinka's equal in exposing the sentimental, Sugnet maintains that too much of *Granta* recycles imperialist clichés about race and geography. Its travel essays, for instance, feature "a rational, detached, slightly disillusioned writer making a foray out from the center (usually London or Oxbridge) to the periphery (Uganda, Benin, Vietnam, Borneo) where he (and it's almost always a he) sees that, as usual, the peripheries are uncivilized, and the people of color who live there are making a botch of running the place." When *Granta* writers go abroad, Sugnet claims, they tramp a path trod nearly a century ago by H. Rider Haggard.

Transition has struck out in a different direction. Much of its contents—a mix of essays, long reviews, and interviews—concerns the African diaspora, but not as some rare and exotic realm suspended in amber. Rather, the diaspora figures as both an essential element of a global cultural milieu and, as in Soyinka's "Beyond the Berlin Wall," an arena of self-determination for the nation and the individual. "We must constantly remember," Soyinka implores his readers, "that the African has never been allowed to enter fully into the European's consciousness, not in a fundamentally affective way, as yet another segment of the human family."

Transition brings the same urgency to the issue of race in the United States—but to its great credit, it enforces no party lines. Is race an inescapable reality or an eradicable myth, the nemesis of a color-blind politics or the catalyst of a multicultural society? All these diverse notions—and many others—have found a home in *Transition*, and have presented themselves, for the most part, in original and intellectually rigorous voices. And

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there is a bonus: *Transition* publishes this cacophony of argument with a minimum of editorial throat-clearing. Readers are not asked to endure self-congratulatory notes about the magazine's breadth or high-mindedness.

The South African novelist Bessie Head once remarked that *Transition* was a home to her during the 1960s because it didn't pretend to have all the answers. This is equally true of the new series. Consider the array of essays in issue 71, published in 1996. There's Scott L. Malcomson's "West of Eden," a glimpse at the lives of Senegalese Muslim immigrants in New York City who peddle greymarket goods out of suitcases in the hopes of achieving "the economic conquest of America." In "Mike's Brilliant Career," Gerald Early muses on Mike Tyson's inability to crack the riddle of black cool. Peter Beinart, in "The Jews of South Africa," examines the difficult choice faced by many Jews living under apartheid: make a separate peace with white politicians and thereby preserve the detachment that sheltered Jews from religious persecution or join blacks in the struggle for liberation and forgo the ethnic identity that detachment protected. And in "The Poverty of Poverty," Nicholas Lemann decries the hollow vocabulary used by intellectuals of both left and right in discussions of economic inequality.

All these pieces are impeccably written, and all of them could have appeared elsewhere: Malcomson's and Early's in the *New Yorker*, Beinart's in the *New York Times Magazine*, Lemann's in the *Nation*. But they didn't. In the late 1960s, the Washington *Post* pegged *Transition* as "a combination of *Ramparts* and the *New Republic*." It would be misleading to define *Transition* with a similar comparison today, for a very simple reason. *Transition* has kept pace with many of the changes around the world, but parts of the magazine world have not taken enough risks to keep pace with *Transition*.

ONE REASON *Transition* has thrived is that it has not forsaken the legacy of its combative founder, Rajat Neogy. In 1960, having returned home to Kampala, Uganda, with a degree from the University of London, Neogy wanted to start a magazine that would spark a literary and intellectual renaissance in East Africa. And why not? The continent as a whole was changing dramatically. That year alone the United Nations had admitted to its ranks seventeen new African states, all the offspring of decolonization. Borders were changing, new political and literary sensibilities were emerging. What better name for a magazine indelibly bound to these changes than *Transition*?

Issue 1 appeared in November 1961, featuring poems, literary criticism, and political essays; its editor was neither an intellectual purist nor a cultural separatist. "There will be no birth without miscegenation," an editorial declared in issue 3. Neogy did not betray those words. He was soon orchestrating the first of many extended debates in *Transition*, as Obiajunwa Wali, a young Nigerian critic, and the novelist Chinua Achebe squared off over the proposition that African novelists should write in African languages. In "The Dead End of African Literature," Wali insisted on making the use of African languages the litmus test of literary achievement; Achebe, in his riposte, "English and the African Writer," offered an eloquent defense of his practice of Africanizing the colonizer's tongue. In time, Wole Soyinka and many other writers of various aesthetic and ideological persuasions joined the fracas.

Besides permitting disputes to unfold over several issues, Neogy also assembled special issues on various subjects—"Love," "Violence"—that fielded a wide range of unorthodox opinions. All bore the imprint of a liberal-minded editorial ethos, one that Neogy described as a mix of an "aggressive non-prejudice, a willingness to see all factions of an argument," and a "disciplined permissiveness that allows proponents to reach the limits of their arguments or points of view." An editor, he continued, "should be neutral but not a neuter. His acceptance of repugnant views must be determined by his ability to reply to them, and not because someone said, 'always look at both sides of the story.'"

Neogy voiced these opinions in 1966 in an essay tagged with the cover line "Do magazines make an impression on culture?" The early *Transition*'s letters pages answered that question with an unequivocal yes. Correspondence

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poured in from around the globe: England, Australia, Sweden, the Virgin Islands, Finland, the United States, Canada, and, of course, various countries in Africa. Some correspondents wrote to applaud, some agreed to disagree, others nit-picked, and still others were just plain mad. *Transition* was not only pissing people off but doing so with such aplomb that the Angry Reader couldn't help but reply. ("Tarzan is an Expatriate," Paul Theroux's 1967 attack on the racism of East African whites, provoked a deluge of angry letters. Neogy gladly printed some of them under the heading "Letters from the Tarzans.") These letters pages, as much as anything else, signaled Neogy's editorial triumph: he had produced a magazine that did not preach to the choir.

THAT TRIUMPH was cut short on October 18, 1968, when the Ugandan regime arrested Neogy on charges of sedition. Prime Minister Apollo Milton Obote could tolerate Neogy's commitment to unfettered expression only if Neogy chose not criticize the new Ugandan government's drift toward tyranny. Of course, Neogy did choose to criticize. In 1967, *Transition* 32 featured a discussion of Obote's "illiberal, authoritarian, and dictatorial" new constitutional proposals, which included a provision for executive powers of preventive detention. True to form, Neogy permitted the head of Obote's secret police to reply to that characterization with a point-by-point rebuttal in *Transition* 33. The constitution was soon ratified, but the exchange about its merits spilled into the next issue of *Transition*, which featured a letter from one Steve Lino, who bitterly charged that the constitution did not befit a democracy. Obote was unwilling to tolerate such dissent, but he did not say so in the letters pages of *Transition*. Instead, he exercised his newly authorized powers of preventive detention and had Neogy jailed. Shortly thereafter he stripped Neogy of his Ugandan citizenship, which meant that Neogy had to leave the country immediately upon his release in March 1969. Steve Lino, it seems, was right.

Henry Louis Gates, Anthony Appiah, and executive editor Michael Colin Vazquez have resurrected Neogy's commitment to pluralism and unfettered debate. "We wouldn't go so far as to publish a piece by David Duke," Appiah told the *Harvard Gazette* in 1993, "but we do publish things we don't agree with." For all their aggressive non-prejudice, however, the editors don't stage disputes in Neogy's manner. With infrequent exceptions, their *Transition* lacks a letters page; with the exception of the recent "White Issue," their magazine is never explicitly themed. Nonetheless, each issue features the latest strands of one or more long-running debates about race. I didn't understand this when I first read *Transition*. I realized it after reading a handful of issues, and the experience was akin to entering a crowded room in which many conversations are occurring simultaneously. With patience one grasps the germ of each conversation, even as some voices peel off in new directions and others chime in.

I use "conversation" only partly as metaphor. Some of *Transition*'s most engaging arguments occur in its interviews, which lend a platform—if not an ear—to some irreverent voices. In issue 70, for instance, Henry Louis Gates chats with Louis Farrakhan, and their conversation opens on a pleasant enough note, with Farrakhan reminiscing about his career as a calypso singer. But when Gates asks Farrakhan "to get into this Jewish thing," the dam breaks and Farrakhan's patented anti-Semitic vitriol spills forth. The interview is remarkable, not least for the way it is framed. Unlike many commentators on Farrakhan, Gates doesn't pander to sensationalism; and unlike Farrakhan himself, Gates forgoes dogma and attends to complexity and irony. "Farrakhan really does believe that a cabal of Jews secretly controls the world," Gates writes in the preface to the interview, and "he also suspects that one of his own grandparents was a Portuguese Jew. Apologists and detractors alike feel free to decide which represents the

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'real' Farrakhan."

Other interviews resemble a conversation from a Philip Roth novel, with characters lobbing rants at each other. In issue 56, Julianne Malveaux spars with Shelby Steele about his book *The Content of Our Character*. Malveaux needles Steele for his opposition to affirmative action; Steele upbraids Malveaux for being a knee-jerk leftist. The exchange finally gets the better of Steele, who explodes in a rage: "If you write a book or if you make a statement that might be interpreted as critical of Black life–Bingo!–you are a right-wing neoconservative. So no one will look at your actual politics after that."

Actually, *Transition* has looked at such politics plenty. Steele himself has been the subject of three pieces in *Transition*, a fact that signals the magazine's ongoing concern with the fortunes of the new black conservatism. The concern is not an infatuation. Rather, it springs from a gumshoe diligence toward the investigation of a problem. The first issue of the new series featured Stephen J. Carter commending Steele and Thomas Sowell for arguing that affirmative action has exacerbated the problem of the color line. In issue 59 the tables were turned—sort of—in Martin Kilson's "Anatomy of Black Conservatism." Kilson inveighs against Carter, Sowell, and Steele for espousing a reactive rather than proactive politics, and thereby leading themselves into a moral declivity. (Steele would probably view Kilson's essay as endorsing precisely the kind of pigeonholing he deplores.) And just last year, in issue 74, Ellen Willis challenged Orlando Patterson's view that the disintegration of the black family is the highest barrier to integration.

An ungenerous reader, having sifted through this small sample of material, might harrumph that *Transition* is either dilettantish (Can't it fix its attention on at least one school of thought!), spineless (Where's the party line?), or sensational (It's staging an endless battle royale). The curious and careful reader will detect something different. What one hears in *Transition*'s intellectually and racially hybrid rap on race is not unlike what Theodor Adorno–in a line quoted by Alex Ross in *Transition* 69–heard in Alban Berg's opera *Lulu*: a grand effort to synthesize "the incompatible, the disparate, and letting them grow together."

Another of *Transition*'s accomplishments is its devotion to the essay. The best essays in *Transition* manage to coax two contentious desires onto speaking terms: the desire to make the essay the tissue of personal reflection, and the desire to make it an instrument of historical analysis. And the essayist, while eschewing the stance of Representative Man (or Woman) monumentalized by Octavio Paz, nonetheless uses hard-won personal experiences and observations to gain a purchase on flinty social realities.

A few examples. "Confusion can be a troubling state of mind, but sometimes it can be the best alternative." So begins "Continental Drift," in which Scott L. Malcomson details his travels through the political landscape of post-cold war Romania, Bulgaria, and Turkey, where he witnesses various nonwhite ethnic groups all trying to forge a flimsy idea of Europe into their escutcheon. "I stayed with Alaydin Hasan Sali," recalls Malcomson of a stopover at the home of a former schoolteacher in Kilment, Turkey. "We toasted. The power turned on, and Madonna appeared on TV. 'Ah, democracy!' Alaydin said, raising his glass." Then there's "The Yellow Negro," in which Joe Wood describes a journey to Japan and his encounters with "jiggers," Japanese teenagers whose enthusiasm for hip-hop runs to the extreme. They darken their complexions with ultraviolet rays to look black, and they hang out in clubs with Africans and African Americans. "This is more baffling than anything white America has ever attempted," writes Wood. "Try to imagine Al Jolson or Sophie Tucker or even Bert Williams wearing their blackface with pride, going out on the town, trying to seduce black people."

Malcomson and Wood use similar voices: unassuming, reflective, and a tad ironic. Each weaves a narrative from vignettes that incorporate short bursts of sociology, splashes of reportage, interviews, bits of scholarship, and scraps of memoir. This mix recalls the New Journalism's knapsack of rhetorical tricks, but both Malcomson and Wood cultivate a prose

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style more akin to that of George Orwell and James Baldwin than Tom Wolfe and Joan Didion—one that favors diffidence and remorseless clarity over sizzle and chilly incisiveness.

Achieving that clarity is what creates the essay's drama, and it is as integral to the social reality depicted in the essay as are the people and places described therein. Take Wood's "The Yellow Negro," which concludes with an enlightening moment of discomfiture. Wood, having circulated among the habitués of the jigger scene, realizes that "the sexualized 'cool' that Japanese attribute to blackness doesn't leave much space for black humanity. They know very little about us." The jiggers, it seems, have lifted their sense of "black culture"—the inner-city homeboy revue—from the tabloids, Hollywood, and MTV. Cut to Wood's last day in Japan, and his account of bathing in a sento, or public bath. In a handful of terse paragraphs, Wood casts three different states of mind against each other: his ruminations about being *kokojuin* (a black foreigner), his obsession with discerning what a fellow bather is thinking about him ("*His skin is dark dark dark.* I could tell—I saw my skin in his eyes and I knew that look and what it meant. I knew!"), and his enthusiasm for the sento ritual of scrubbing under cold water taps before immersion in a pool of steaming water.

DURING A TRIP South in the early 1960s, James Baldwin dubbed himself a fly in buttermilk. Wood, trying to stay fly in the sento, resolves his episode of exfoliation on this note:

> I nearly passed out. With effort I rose, went to the faucets, scrubbed my body once more. I washed hard, cleaned everything again, including my hair this time. The other man left. I went back to the tub. My skin felt raw and good. I let my muscles go and submitted to the hold of weightlessness. My head began to pulse once more, a good warm pulsing. *So warm are the ashes of burning empires.* I got out and repeated the process several times. With a new car owner's pride I celebrated my small triumphs: how I'd brought myself to Japan, how I'd found this truly Japanese sento, how I felt right at home. *This is the cleanest I've been since my mother let me out of her belly*, I thought, as I eyed the blackfaced Japanese in the mirror.

Rage is the raw material of many of *Transition*'s finest essays. Besides Wood's "The Yellow Negro," there's Adrian Piper's autobiographical "Passing for White, Passing for Black" and Jamaica Kincaid's "On Seeing England for the First Time," a sharp-elbowed recollection of growing up in Antigua, where as a child the three words "Made in England" infiltrated Kincaid's life absolutely. "I did not know then that the statement 'Draw a Map of England' was something far worse than a declaration of war," Kincaid writes, "for in fact a flat-out declaration of war would have put me on alert, and again in fact there was no need for war—I had long ago been conquered."

But sometimes rage gets the better of *Transition*'s essayists, and they give way to ranting. Take "For Polite Reactionaries,"in which Charles Sugnet attacks the political sensibility of the *Atlantic*. Sugnet chooses all the right targets—the monthly's myopic view of race in the United States, its publication of Robert Kaplan's crypto-colonial essays on Africa—yet his belligerent, strident tone suggests he might be more at home at a county fair duck shoot. Some other essays are merely sensationalist. In "The Feminazi Mystique," for instance, bell hooks examines the career of the filmmaker Leni Riefensthal. That hooks, an outspoken feminist, claims that for many feminists the director of the Nazi spectacle *Triumph of the Will* "remains an artist to study, admire, and emulate" is certainly provocative. But hooks's flat-footed prose, hamstrung by psychoanalytic jargon, drains her essay of nuance, and her contrarian remarks about Riefensthal's being a feminist hero ring hollow.

In some instances, however, a contrarian sensibility can do more than simply shock or numb. Last year in *Transition*, Lindsay Waters assailed a recent book about contemporary politics that, in his words, "blasphemes the truth of our dreams." Mind you, Waters, the executive editor of humanities at Harvard University Press, didn't attack just any book. The root of his indignation is a volume from Harvard's own list. Richard Rorty's *Achieving Our Country*, Waters sneers,"is the supreme instance of what George Santayana calls the

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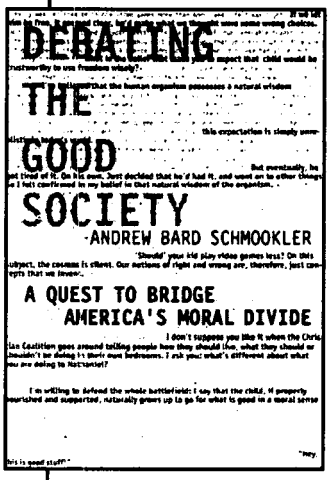
genteel tradition." And whose grasp of contemporary politics does Waters prefer to that of his marquee author? Someone whom he dubs an incarnation of Emersonian individualism: the late gangsta rapper Tupac Shakur.

Despite delivering a philippic about *Achieving Our Country*, Waters still respects Rorty, striking an impish tone one has come to expect from *Transition*. After all, where else would you find an editor arguing in print about the merits and demerits of one of his author's books? For that matter, where else would you find, in back-to-back issues, an essay that deplores the phenomenon of the yellow Negro and an essay that, by pitting the ironic white professor against the "real" black rapper, carries echoes of Norman Mailer's "The White Negro"? *Transition* has never shrunk from taking gambles, and that's precisely why it remains vital. ●

JOHN PALATTELLA's essays and reviews have appeared in *Lingua Franca, Dissent, Boston Review,* and other publications.



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Gide's Tragedy and Ours

David Glenn

ANDRÉ GIDE: A LIFE IN THE PRESENT
by Alan Sheridan
Harvard University Press, 1999 634 pp $35

One of the hardest tasks of André Gide's long life was a translation of *Hamlet*, which he completed in 1942 after twenty years of intermittent labor. Rendering Shakespeare's lyricism and wordplay into French was so arduous, he wrote, that each day's effort resulted in "dislocating one's brains." But even after decades of such torture, Gide never lost his fascination with the play. A journal entry from late 1943 reads:

> [E]ach decisive action on the part of Hamlet is preceded by a sort of try-out of that action, as if it had some trouble fitting into *reality*. Already at the very beginning of the drama, in the dialogue with the ghost; then in any one of Hamlet's ways of behaving, toward his mother, with the King, with Ophelia . . . first he outlines the action, awkwardly. . . .Before the successful realization, there is always a failure.

Nearly half a century after his death, Gide is remembered best for two bold acts of truth-telling: his defense of homosexuality and his exposure of Stalinism. This present reputation carries two heavy ironies. The first is that Gide was above all else a literary person, and was never comfortable playing advocate. It was his novels that he hoped would endure, and, in the English-speaking world, it is not clear that they will. The second irony is that, like Hamlet's, Gide's intelligence was driven, and sometimes swamped, by a volatile chemistry of desire, fear, and ambivalence. To remember Gide as an archetype of the liberal rebel—as someone who challenged tyranny and bigotry through the sustained application of critical reason—is to grasp only a small fragment of his complex (and sometimes unattractive) existence. Gide was a tireless student of tragedy—and the successes and failures of his studies shed light on our own fragmented condition.

One great virtue of Alan Sheridan's beautifully written new biography is that it does not try to claim Gide as a trophy for liberalism, modernism, or any other intellectual terrain. Sheridan's résumé includes a book on Michel Foucault and translations of Jean-Paul Sartre and Jacques Lacan, but he begins with this disarming admission: "I have no theory about Gide. I have lost whatever faith I ever had in man's attempts to understand himself in general terms, whether these pertain to soul or psyche, societies or cultures. I have wasted too many long hours wrestling with such problems, hours that would have been better spent in the company of particular human creations."

And that is exactly what Sheridan allows his reader to do with Gide: with great clarity and wit, and with a minimum of analytical fanfare, he brings us into the company of a particular life and a particular body of work. The miracle is that, in a volume of nearly three hundred thousand words, the narrative almost never becomes tedious. Whenever Sheridan threatens to descend into eye-glazing detail, as in this description of an 1898 visit to Rome—"Over the next six weeks, they visited the usual museums and churches. They attended concerts of music by Palestrina and Bach, and made excursions to Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli"—he immediately rescues himself with something vivid or surprising or lyrical: "André went several times to the old Protestant cemetery, persuading the caretaker to lend him a key for his own use. There he visited Keats's grave, reciting lines to himself that he barely understood."

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The book leads us through Gide's early literary development in the milieu of the Symbolist poets in the 1890s; his sexual awakening, in his mid-twenties, in encounters with adolescent boys in Algeria and Tunisia; his devoted, painful love for, and (unconsummated) marriage to, his cousin Madeleine; his mature literary work, which alternated between austere neoclassicism and loose-limbed satire; his embrace of communism in 1931, at the age of sixty-one, and his public renunciation five years later, once he had seen the Soviet Union firsthand; his late career as a beloved literary elder, which was capped in 1947 with the Nobel Prize. The supporting cast includes, among many others, Marcel Proust, Rainer Maria Rilke, Igor Stravinsky, Jean Cocteau, Albert Camus, and Oscar Wilde.

In 1891, shortly after they had met at a Paris literary salon, Wilde told the twenty-one-year-old Gide: "I don't like your lips; they are straight, like those of someone who has never lied. I want to teach you to lie, so that your lips might become beautiful and twisted like those of an ancient mask." Gide never did become comfortable with lies. Even after rejecting his parents' rigorous Protestantism, Gide kept one inheritance from their faith: a loathing of hypocrisy. It was this devotion to sincerity, Gide's admirers and enemies agreed, that finally drove him to pierce through his communist friends' dogma and sentimentality, and more bravely, to publish *Corydon* (1924), a fictionalized Socratic dialogue that stands as the first modern treatise in defense of homosexuality. *Corydon* cost Gide some close friendships and drew down upon him the wrath of the French Establishment. When the neo-Thomist theologian Jacques Maritain begged Gide to pray for guidance about whether to publish the book, he received the reply: "No. I have lived too long, too intimately, with the thought of Christ, to agree to call him today as one might call someone on the telephone." (It was not only Gide's temperament that permitted his rebellion, of course. His literary stature and his wealth—he was an only child whose grandparents had been prosperous manufacturers—cushioned him from public opprobrium.)

But it would be a gross mistake to remember Gide as a sort of Thomas Paine of literary Paris—as someone who coolly and cleanly spoke truth to power. He arrived at his truths through agonies of hesitation, yearning, and doubt that would have made Hamlet proud. "[E]xcessive understanding of the *other side* [has] always held me back," he wrote in his journal in 1930. "I have always been paralyzed by scruples." So intense was his ambivalence that he once quipped that each of his new novels was written to rebut the premises of the previous one. Although he rarely felt shame about his homosexuality per se, he did suffer profound conflicts about how to civilize his promiscuous energies: to reconcile his passions with his ongoing devotion to his shy and pious spouse, and to bring his passions into harmony with his commitments to art and to classicism.

This knot of conflicted impulses came together most vividly in *The Immoralist* (1902), whose hero, Michel, begins a Nietzschean project of self-creation after a near-fatal bout with tuberculosis. ("I must consider Good, I must call Right, whatever was healthy for me; must forget, must repulse whatever did not cure.") Gide writes in the novel's introduction that he "wanted to write this book neither as an indictment nor as an apology;" but it may be more accurate to say that he intended it as both. Gide's spare prose conveys Michel's aesthetic awakening with unmistakable conviction. But by the novel's end, Michel is living a dissolute life in a remote desert village, listlessly conducting a liaison with two Arab adolescents, his energies drained. Although the novel closely mirrors certain events in Gide's life, Sheridan cautions against facile identification of the two. Among other things, Gide himself never reached such a state of decadence:

> Michel took Nietzsche simplistically, absolutely, abandoning Culture for Nature, letting the weak go the wall, etc., and, in the end, lost everything. Gide knew what to leave as well as what to take of Nietzsche. . . In working out a *modus vivendi* that could accommodate both his marriage and his homosexual adventures, Gide called on the un-Nietzschean but very Gidean quality of compromise—as, of course, did Madeleine.

This *modus vivendi* did not evolve without

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pain. In 1917, Gide fell deeply in love with the seventeen-year-old future filmmaker Marc Allégret; when they traveled to England together the following year, Madeleine burned all of Gide's letters to her. But even after this melodramatic purge, the couple maintained a constant devotion—sometimes traveling great distances to care for one another during illnesses—until Madeleine's death in 1938. By the early 1930s, Gide was splitting his time between the country estate he shared with Madeleine and a semi-communal home at 1 bis rue Vaneau in Paris. The residents of Vaneau included at various points Marc Allégret, who kept his friendship with Gide for decades after their affair had cooled; Maria van Rysselberghe, the "*Petite Dame*," the widow of a painter, who was Gide's closest friend during the second half of his life; the *Petite Dame*'s daughter Elisabeth; and Elisabeth's daughter Catherine, who was also secretly Gide's. (In 1922, the thirty-two-year-old Elisabeth, who had long wanted to raise a child on her own, asked Gide to father one with her.)

The happiness that Gide found in his unorthodox extended family after 1918 may have brought more harmony to his soul—but his literary work arguably suffered for it. James Baldwin once complained that "both [Gide's] Heaven and his Hell suffer from a certain lack of urgency." This is certainly the case in *The Counterfeiters* (1925), the novel that most commentators, including Sheridan, promote as Gide's richest and most mature. *The Counterfeiters*—an impossible-to-summarize novel about a group of mismatched lovers and a band of delinquent children—was Gide's attempt to blend his two modes of writing: earnest classicism and picaresque satire a la Fielding. Some of its modernist elements, including its exquisitely unresolved ending, have aged well. But the characters themselves, at least those who are treated earnestly, are mostly unmemorable. Their romantic conflicts seem overdetermined, as if Gide were trying to illustrate the social principles he had advanced in *Corydon*.

Gide paid virtually no attention to questions of economic justice until his 1925-1926 journey through the Congo with Marc Allégret. There (alongside his usual sexual adventuring) Gide discovered with horror the colonial authorities' treatment of African workers, especially on rubber plantations. Upon their return he and Allégret campaigned to rescind the police powers enjoyed by the rubber corporations operating in France's and Belgium's African colonies; but after a few months he returned to literary life.

Five years later, in 1931, Gide suddenly emerged as a full-throated Soviet fellow-traveler. Over the next few years, he served as honorary chair or president of such Party fronts as the *Association des Ecrivains et Artistes Révolutionaires* and the World Conference of Youth Against War and Fascism. It was of course a time of economic crisis; but like many other communist enthusiasts from the literary world, Gide seems to have been motivated more by the Soviet Union's teleology than by any deeply felt rage at poverty or inequality. Sheridan quotes a journal entry in which Gide applauds Leninism's promise that "humanity can change, that a society can take shape on different foundations . . . that the future need not be a repetition and reproduction of the past."

Gide explained his sudden political fervor as a byproduct of his advancing age and his expectations of death: "That is why I am involving myself so deeply, so *imprudently*, in Communism." A close friend, the novelist Roger Martin du Gard, described him, with some disgust and despair, as "an old man in a hurry." In 1933 he wrote to Gide:

> It is painful to see a life, whose finest achievement has been to struggle, with the weapons of the critical sense, against the dogmas of religion and moral conformity, end in an "act of faith." . . . The Gide of twenty years ago would have been pitilessly severe on the Gide of today. . . . Little by little you have already been pushed so far [by the Party] that the slightest failure to demonstrate fanaticism would make you look like a coward and a renegade. They've got you, the "ungraspable" Gide!

In fact, as Sheridan demonstrates, Gide never was quite grasped entirely by communism. He began to feel his usual scruples and

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doubts well before his final renunciation. In 1933, a Parisian communist theater troupe adapted Gide's twenty-year-old novel *The Vatican Cellars*, and they attempted to butcher the novel's plot and tone so as to present it as a crude polemic against the Catholic church. Only Gide's strenuous objections prevented them from making these changes. ("But you're castrating your work!" they implored.) This near-fiasco was hugely ironic (and probably ought to have unsettled Gide more than it did) because *The Vatican Cellars* itself concerns a dogmatically secular scientist who abruptly converts to Catholicism, and is then bullied by church officials into making an elaborate public recantation of his previous ways. "You have propagated heresy by all the means in your power, and now you would elude the duty of allowing Heaven to dispose of you for its own high purposes of instruction and example?" This is very close to the attitude with which the Stalinist apparatus greeted Gide.

When Gide visited the Soviet Union in mid-1936, that apparatus took elaborate steps to honor him as a literary hero. The government distributed hundreds of thousands of post cards with Gide's image, and his arrival was trumpeted in every newspaper. A parade of 2,500 Young Pioneers cried *"Vive André Gide!"* Here Sheridan notes laconically: "Gide, who did not respond to humanity (even male youth) organized en masse, was not impressed." Indeed, he was left cold by the entire visit. Party officials forbade Gide from delivering his prepared speech to a group of young writers, because it was insufficiently reverent toward Socialist Realism. ("Just as there were bourgeois commonplaces," the speech warned, "there are now revolutionary commonplaces.") Visiting Stalin's hometown in Georgia,

> Gide, courteous as ever, took it into his head to send the Soviet leader a telegram, thanking him for the splendid welcome that they had been given by the Soviet peoples. He jotted down a few words: "Passing through Gori in the course of our wonderful journey, I felt a need to express our cordial feelings . . . ." The translator objected: "You" was not enough when addressing Stalin. "You, chief of the workers" or "You, master of the peoples" would be more in keeping. Gide protested that Stalin was quite above such nonsense. Translator and post office were adamant. Gide made a scene. . .

As this last anecdote suggests, Gide's change of heart came largely from his disgust with petty hypocrisies, not from a real recognition of the nature of Stalin's regime or the corpses piling up beneath it. (That recognition came to Gide haltingly during the next few years, as news of the Moscow Trials spread, and as he heard stories from the front lines of the Spanish Civil War.) The two books Gide published in the months just after his visit (*Back from the USSR* and *Afterthoughts on the USSR*) today seem almost comically gentle and even-handed—though what they said was enough to earn him the calumny of the Stalinist press worldwide. For better or worse, Gide never again reached this level of political engagement. In the last fifteen years of his old age, living through occupation, war, and their aftermath, Gide befriended a wide range of left-of-center thinkers, but his own energies tended to return to aesthetic and literary questions.

THE CUMULATIVE effect of Sheridan's 634 pages is to lead the reader into a Gidean frame of mind—which is to say, a divided and ambivalent mind. It is easy to be drawn, like one of Gide's aesthetic rebels, into a sort of rapture at the great sad beauty of the man's life: his gift for diverse and sustained friendships; his travels into corners of the world that few of his peers ever saw; his decades-long devotion to the study of Goethe, Shakespeare, Virgil, and of course to the creation of his own fiction; his palpable *sweetness*—his incapacity for deliberate cruelty. But it's also easy to take on the role of "the Protestant pastor" that Gide said he always carried around in his head, and to think, at various points: Wait! Stop! This is not at all how *I* would act if I could travel back in time . . . One yearns to reach back and shake Gide by the lapels: to teach him the realities of French imperialism, and to clear the racialist cobwebs out of his brain; to beg him not to waste five years of his life and prestige as a useful idiot for Moscow; to tell him, yes, of course it's ab-

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surd that society objects that your lovers are men—but to eroticize only men who are barely post-pubescent, and to make a fetish of your Arab and African lovers' "primitive" essences? *That* will seem eternally creepy.

And these moralistic impulses are not, I submit, merely the arrogance of hindsight. Gide occasionally wrote that only future generations would truly appreciate his work—that he was helping to create a new society. So he deserves, in part, to be judged through exactly this sort of lens. Here Sheridan is not always helpful. His discussion of the follies and self-delusions that went into Gide's communist adventure strikes just the right tone; he gently rebuts Gide's Red Square speech nearly line by line. But on the matter of race, Sheridan glides right over most of the sticky questions. His conclusion features a sunny paragraph that emphasizes Gide's tenderness toward particular Arab lovers, and his 1926 campaign to reform the Congo rubber industry. But there is much more to be said—also in 1926, for example, Gide suddenly decided that the Tunisians, whom he had romanticized so intensely three decades earlier, were "hideous, vile, abject," in contrast to "the good blacks in the Congo." Sheridan reports this comment and others like it, but never critically examines the habits of mind that gave rise to them. (A further question that Sheridan doesn't address at all is Gide's streak of respectable anti-Semitism. Several of his best friends, including Léon Blum, were Jews, but Gide was still capable as late as 1948 of musing in his journal that Gentiles have "more profound" qualities than Jews; he admires Sartre's *Anti-Semite and Jew*, but declares that "there is none the less a 'Jewish question,' painful and obsessive, and far from being settled.")

IN THE END, of course, Gide *did* help to create a new society. He was the writer most admired by two generations of French students; perhaps more than anyone else, he helped to transmit Emersonianism to France. He was an early exemplar of a mode of thinking and living—gentle, self-centered, appealingly hedonistic—that increasingly describes the entire middle classes of Western Europe and the United States. Sheridan's close-grained examination of Gide's life helps us, among other things, to meditate on this new mode's virtues (the loosening of sexuality and sex roles, the decline of certain kinds of everyday cruelties and bigotries) and on its appalling inadequacies. We in those middle classes will probably be remembered, like Gide, as people who devoted great energies to (real and difficult) problems of personal life, but who responded too late, too clumsily, or not at all to the catastrophes swirling in the larger world. Like Gide, and like Hamlet, we operate in a terrible fog. ●

DAVID GLENN is associate editor of *Dissent*.

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The X–Philes

Rick Perlstein

RATIONAL EXUBERANCE:
THE INFLUENCE OF GENERATION X
ON THE NEW AMERICAN ECONOMY
by Meredith Bagby
E.P. Dutton, 1998 274 pp $24.95

I HAVE BEFORE me a book on the political economy of Generation X that resembles nothing so much as a hundred mediocre freshman compositions strung together end to end. To shoot, briefly, some fish in their barrels: "We have been determined by the negatives and positives of an America era that saw moms transformed into full-time workers, become masters of their own reproductive systems, and engineer elections through platforms they supported . . . . We explore. We invent. We question. We go our own way. The plusses of this behavior are legion as we lead our nation and our world into truly global, color-blind, nonideological, and borderless, thought, action, and production . . . . we are lining up now in Washington, in state capitals and local courthouses, on Wall Street, Main Street, and Madison Avenue to see that reforms grow out of methodical transcendency and applied practicality . . . ." Then comes the second page.

"The course of a human generation is but a breath in time," this author writes. "But measured by the challenges of the day a generation can change the course of human history." She offers by way of evidence the generation that "brought us the high art of the Renaissance." Those who think of a single human generation as lasting a few decades and the Renaissance as spanning a few centuries can be excused for conjuring up visions of Methusalahs running around with paint brushes. She says it was the cold war that brought us "the two-hemisphere world," that "no nation has ever survived without one central language," that "The threat of Soviet aggression . . . did little to improve the standing of public school teachers who saw federal spending on education stagnate." By way of predictions she offers that Generation X "will gradually climb the corporate ladder, largely replacing the Boomers." Indeed. One would hope that forty years from now there are more corporations run by people in their sixties than in their nineties.

All of this raises the legitimate question of why you should be detained by a review of a book this bad. I ask your indulgence. Its author, a young woman named Meredith Bagby, regularly testifies before Congress as the authoritative voice of the views and aspirations of her generation. And wouldn't you know that Generation X thinks a lot like Ross Perot?

IT STARTED at Harvard. Bagby, a bright-faced and ambitious scholarship student from Florida, hits in 1994 on an idea for a senior project. She will present federal budget data as if it were a financial statement to the stockholders of a large corporation. Her self-published booklet, "The First Annual Report of the United States of America," attracts media attention, then a book contract, and before long, HarperCollins has a tidy little annual franchise selling the same kind of compendium of charts and graphs that any decent newspaper publishes during the budget mark-up period every year. A certain eccentric billionaire, overfond of charts and graphs, comes calling, and Bagby is invited to join every viable presidential candidate as a speaker at the 1995 United We Stand convention. "She is going to be talking about her generation and her generation's children and why we can't let these things continue the way they are," Ross

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Perot tells *U.S. News and World Report*. "I'll bet you the biggest steak in Texas your reaction will be, 'I would not want to follow Meredith.'"

You would not want to follow Meredith the way you would not want to follow Oliver North. She beams from the flap of this book with a face so winsome, so telegenic she seems almost to loose herself from the page and give you a hug. Soon Bagby was appearing on *Good Morning America*, *Larry King Live*, *NBC Nightly News with Tom Brokaw*. She was plucked from her job as financial analyst at Morgan Stanley to become "Generation X financial corespondent" for the CNN Financial Network. In 1997 *Swing* magazine named her one of the most powerful Americans in their twenties; the same year she was keynote speaker at the twenty-ninth annual Youth Leadership Conference, sponsored by Senator William V. Roth.

And now she has written her manifesto, complete with blurbs from Perot and Roth. It begins, innocently if incompetently enough, with the signal gesture of its genre, arguing that Generation X does not exist, long live Generation X. Douglas Coupland's 1992 coinage of the term was brilliant, of course, in exactly this surly way: X is a variable, an absence, a locational placeholder; an apparition conjured up by its contexts. X could only be solved—be rendered visible—by comparison to what it was not: pushy, preening, *present* Baby Boomers, possessed of job security, plain old good cheer, and the knowledge of where India can be found on a map.

But if all this became the occasion for endless bouts of the sort of rampant coffeehouse deconstructionism the buzz told us "we" favored—can coherence be defined by a refusal to cohere? beyond what level does meta-identity simply become identity? when is a bicycle messenger who moonlights as a performance artist just a bicycle messenger who moonlights as a performance artist?—it all became serious, and settled, soon enough: there was money to be made, after all. And so Bagby. One of the few truly eye-opening revelations in this book is that in the quest for the demographic grail, consultants began going around with video cameras to record twenty-somethings in their very own lairs, selling the tapes in packages of three for $3,800 to the likes of Liz Claiborne and Mattel. Generation X acquired a look, a feel, a heft—an *identity*. Bagby, who is about as ironic as a bar of soap, only detains herself for a page or so fretting about how there is no there there, about how much is lost in the broad strokes of generational discourse: "our ethnic diversity, complex political views (combining aspects of liberal and conservative), and the many facets of our multiple cultures and backgrounds." She did not reach such heights of spokespersondom through metaphysical handwringing. "Most young adults realize the importance of 'defining a generation,'" she declares. "Society needs to make demographic assumptions about people in order to sell them goods, collect taxes, dole out government benefits." And so, soon enough her own definitions are forthcoming.

GenXers are hard workers, good capitalists. And *good* capitalists: "I'm doing this to make money," women's snowboard apparel magnate Kristin Roach, twenty-two, is quoted, "but I also have a cause here: to support women in sports." They chafe at authority, and revel in flexibility, of course. "We combine a belief in sixties idealism with social and economic pragmatism," says a recent college grad and Web entrepreneur. "Our ethic puts personal freedom, happiness, and lifestyle choices above the house in the suburbs, the new car, and the many other status symbols that characterize the 'work ethic' of past generations. For us, it is autonomy at all costs." They mistrust Washington, naturally. (In an astonishing example of misplaced blame, a twenty-four-year-old men's magazine editor frets, "The whole concept of 'lifestyle' is demonic—from hell or from the government.") Toward unions GenXers are indifferent, because GenXers "tend to be pro-free enterprise and free trade."

By contrast, "Generation X is putting a 'rush' on the soft drink market like no previous generation." Bagby quotes C.J. Rapp, president of Rochester-based Global Beverages: "Caffeinated drinks satisfy the needs of a demanding lifestyle," he says. "The world has

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become more complex and demanding, so there is a greater need for drinks that provide stimulation." Coca-Cola, it turns out, spent something like $60 million on its new high-caffeine Surge brand, mostly for ads—about twice the AFL-CIO's annual political budget. So it is not surprising that the subject is granted fourteen paragraphs, one alone on the booming market for caffeinated spring water, while unions get three.

Bagby's Generation X understands that as the world becomes more complex and demanding we need more caffeine, less politics. "In our trial and error," Bagby writes, "we are constructing a new way of thinking, a new code of judgment. The code is based on the foundations of economic thought." She asks us to consider the question of abortion. "A philosopher might begin the debate with questions: When does life begin? Where does the duty of society lie, to the unborn or to the liberty of women to chose? A lawyer would turn to precedent, *Roe vs.* [sic] *Wade*." The economist? "She says: 'If, whether you are pro-life or pro-choice, we can say that abortion is not the desired end of pregnancy, then the real question is, how do we reduce unwanted pregnancies?' We do it through sex education, teaching abstinence, or through the proliferation of contraception. The economist seeks what is common among differing factions and builds a solution." Since everyone agrees on the desirability of sex education and handing out contraceptives, *presto*: problem solved.

Bagby is blithely unaware that this has all been said before, that when you tug the loose thread of any argument for disinterested technocratic expertise, politics will always show up under the ragged upholstery. In this book there are so many loose threads the ugly political undercushion peeks through on nearly every page. She tends to repeat herself, but the point is put most succinctly in a chapter title, "A Whimper, Not a Bang: Shouldering the Great Society." *It's just*, as her jug-eared mentor would put it, *that simple*: "Today we are told by economists that the government is transferring huge quantities of wealth from future generations to current generations by fostering unsustainable retirement plans like Social Security and by running up debt that future generations will have to pay."

Bagby is more than a disinterested chronicler of that particular argument. Buried within the menagerie of political youth groups she profiles with apparent disinterestedness in the chapter entitled (of course) "Neither Elephant nor Donkey" we find this: "Third Millennium [TM] is on the front lines as a growing national advocacy and educational organization for young people. It defines itself as standing outside standard structures: 'Third Millennium isn't liberal, moderate, or conservative, but postpartisan. We look beyond the ideologies of both parties to focus on pragmatic solutions,' says Richard Thau, the executive director. Its focus is national, 'to build consensus around solutions to America's national debt, Social Security, health-care, environmental, racial, and educational crises.'"

Do a little digging and you learn that its board of advisers includes Sylvester Schieber, the most gung-ho privatizer on the thirteen-member federal bipartisan Social Security Advisory Council; Richard Lamm, the former Colorado governor who was the Reform Party's number two; and Tim Penny, a former Democratic congressional representative from Minnesota, now closely associated with the libertarian Cato Institute. Its Board of Directors includes . . . Meredith Bagby. She writes: "Thau says Third Millennium takes money from a wide variety of interests—businesses and private individuals, liberal and conservative—but is careful not to accept too much money from any one source, to avoid becoming the pawn of any one interest." Judge for yourself. Third Millennium is perhaps best known for a 1994 poll in which it revealed that more GenXers believe in UFOs than that they will ever receive a Social Security check. Scratch that statistic and you realize at once it is mere rhetoric: it says nothing about the reality of Social Security, gives no indication if these would-be beneficiaries are right or wrong in their incredulity. But in its infinite repetition, the UFO statistic still moved mountains in instilling a popular defeatism about the possibility of a simple fix for the Social Security problem.

This year, Third Millennium released the results of a new Social Security poll, co-spon-

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sored by the investment company the Oppenheimer Group. When you hear about the Wall Street firms who have been quietly pushing the Social Security debate in the direction of privatization these last few years, think Oppenheimer Funds. Its chairman, Jon Fossel, also leads the Investment Company Institute (ICI), the lobbying arm of the mutual funds industry. In the mid-nineties ICI led a loud charge for Social Security privatization. In 1996 the campaign got a little quieter when the *Wall Street Journal* reported that privatization could be "the biggest bonanza in the history of the mutual fund industry." At the January press conference in which the TM/Oppenheimer Funds poll was released, there were more catchy sound bites on the popular distrust of Social Security—50 percent of Americans think that the Super Bowl is a better investment than their FICA dollars; 65 percent of Americans ages eighteen to thirty-four think they're more likely to see a professional wrestler in the White House than a Social Security check. Sixty-six percent believe Washington should "act now" on Social Security.

There was also a coda that the earlier, non-Oppenheimer-funded Third Millennium poll did not include. Respondents were asked to rank their preferred fixes for the system. Thirty-nine percent preferred raising the retirement age. Sixty-five percent favored reducing benefits for retirees earning over $100,000. The most popular, with 76 percent of those surveyed, was "giving workers a choice where to invest their Social Security dollars." No other choices—more social democratic solutions like assessing FICA on income above the current cap of $68,500, dedicating the federal budget surplus to Social Security reform, or investing part of the trust fund in the market—were provided, and presto: backed by the moral authority of a "leading advocacy group for young Americans," Oppenheimer Funds could wave the American people's "consensus" on government-sponsored private retirement accounts in reporters' and politicians' faces. End of argument. "There's been enough discussion," said TM director Thau. "The Social Security issue has received more proposals than Elizabeth Taylor."

It would be hard to find interest-group hustle of a purer ore in all of Washington. Here is Bagby testifying in 1997 in front of the Senate Finance Committee in favor of adjusting the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to take in the Boskin Commission's recommendation that the current index overstates inflation, causing the government to hand out too much Social Security cash. "This issue is crucial to the future of Americans in my age group and the generations that follow. . . . Imagine how foolish today's Americans will seem to future generations if we sit idle. They will look at us in dismay and wonder how we had the gall to pass on to them needlessly another trillion dollars in debt . . . . I think the other members of this panel would agree that we must not make this a political issue . . . . We hope the AARP [American Association of Retired Persons] will show similar restraint in the CPI discussion." By the next year, when hearings were held by the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare, TM had made itself so ubiquitous with its nonpartisan voice of young American *schtick* that it was invited to represent the youth perspective by both the Democratic and Republican members of the commission; and there was Bagby, this time wheeling out the findings that a majority of young Americans think the soap opera *General Hospital* will outlast the Medicare system. This time TM recommended both partial privatization and an immediate raising of the eligibility age for Medicare. Senator Jay Rockefeller called them "selfish."

It is for the reader to decide whether Bagby is selfish. I will limit my criticism here to her technical competence. Her case for entitlement reform rests on statistics she presents on how much more poorly young people are faring in today's economy compared to other age groups, and also to young people in previous decades. The median incomes of households headed by those fifteen to twenty-four fell something like 10 percent between 1980 and 1995, and for families headed by those twenty-five to thirty-four it fell 3 percent. "In contrast, in this period the incomes of people over the age of 65 skyrocketed 25 percent." And: "the average household net worth in 1998 for those under 35 was $29,450 and for those over 65 was $133,760." Why? Our entitlement programs,

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she writes, are "financed by a huge pyramid scheme . . . . Through programs like Social Security and Medicare, the government has become a kind of intergenerational Robin Hood—taking money from the young and giving it to the old."

This from someone who graduated magna cum laude in economics from Harvard! Statistics about generations are meaningless unless you control for the effects of the period in which they are collected and for experiences that are constant for those at a certain age in any time period. The falling median income for young people is a combination of an age effect and a period effect: young people always tend to be in lower income brackets than old people—the age effect; all people in lower income brackets tended to do worse than people in higher income brackets in the past few decades—the period effect. And if you believe that's because of entitlement programs: well, then, you'll probably also believe that the $4.5 trillion national debt was largely caused "by creating unsustainable social programs like Social Security and Medicare." Or that America's economic downturn began "during the Carter administration."

Comb through enough sludge, of course, and you're bound to find something valuable. Bagby delivers two sets of statistics that deserve attention. The fact is that Generation X is poorly positioned to defend its interests in the political realm, whatever they may actually be. In the 1994 congressional elections, 17 percent of those aged eighteen to twenty voted. Sixty-one percent of voters over the age of sixty-five cast ballots. This is old news, of course. Another statistic, however, gives things a spin. Young people don't stay away from the polls because they're retreating from the world. They're just too busy starting businesses. Bagby cites one study that suggests people eighteen to thirty-four start 70 percent of all new businesses in America. Fifty-four percent of those eighteen to twenty-four report interest in starting a business. For those aged thirty-five to sixty-four, the number is 36 percent.

What remains, of course, is to interpret the numbers, and here, Bagby is typically shortsighted. Her Generation X is like Garrison Keillor's Lake Wobegon: All the children are above average. Amid her glowing profiles of successful entrepreneurs, there is not a word on *failed* businesses. A free-market system creates social progress precisely because of those new businesses that fall by the wayside—providing, or so the theory goes, market signals about what is valuable and what is not. Less remarked upon, however, is the psychological quirk that sets the whole process in motion: most people assume they will succeed. If this were not the case, why start a new business? Not to put too fine a point on it, but entrepreneurs, God love them, are souls seized by a measure of fantasy.

So it is that Generation X's penchant for identifying with the Great American Crapshoot of entrepreneurship may not be all to the good. "*Flexibility, autonomy, control* are our buzzwords," Bagby writes. She does not note that the nation's fastest growing occupational category is cashier, or that the fastest growing employer is the temporary-help agency Manpower International—meaning GenXers by dint of the age effect are more likely to find themselves mired in a segment of the economy where flexibility, autonomy, and control are but a dream. Flexibility, autonomy, and control would be the buzzwords of toddlers, had they the vocabulary to properly express themselves; we so dearly want what we cannot have. Perhaps so many young people cherish fantasies of tycoondom for the same reason they greet space aliens with more credulity than social programs: glorifying the most insecure career path, they play a game of chicken with the insecurity they instinctually fear, but cannot admit to fearing.

Amid her so many asinine sentences, the meaningless polls that pass by like soap bubbles, the craven plugs for her pals and comrades, the dippy generalizations, Bagby pens one thing that reveals more than she realizes. Entrepreneurship, she writes, is "a promising path for minorities who have not traditionally been afforded opportunities in corporate America." Replace "minorities" with "young people," deliver it with an ironic sneer, and you have something like the classic psychic portrait of Generation X.

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Or perhaps an achingly true psychic portrait of all of us. For a paper called "Is There a Generation X?" Stanford's David B. Grusky and Eric Rice studied surveys on American subjective well being from the seventies to the nineties and found that people in their twenties are indeed more dejected than their counterparts in years past. But they also found that *all* age groups are more disaffected than they were twenty years ago. Meanwhile, the Roper Group asked in 1993 what people found the "very important" benefits to having money. Only 58 percent cited autonomy. Seventy-eight percent said security. But security is a scarce quantity these days, scarcer, more and more young people seem to believe, than a UFO. What course, then, but to make virtue of necessity? "In short"—to quote the wisdom of Meredith Bagby—"not to react, but to pro-act. The peace of our present gives us the time to secure our future. This generation of Americans must use the tools of logic, pragmatism, and economics with ethics to conquer this last frontier." Hell, if someone like Meredith Bagby can make it as an entrepreneur, who's to say you can't, either? ●

RICK PERLSTEIN's book on the 1964 Barry Goldwater campaign and the rise of the conservative movement will be published next year by Hill & Wang.

Lost Culture

Adam Shatz

THE RED ATLANTIS:
COMMUNIST CULTURE IN
THE ABSENCE OF COMMUNISM
by J. Hoberman
Temple University Press, 1999 304 pp $34.95

SHORTLY AFTER the fall of communism, I found myself longing for the bad old days. Not, mind you, for the grim world of secret police files, work camps, and show trials; nor even for the heady slogans of third world liberation. I was nostalgic, rather, for the literature of extreme situations (Sartre's phrase) produced by the intellectuals who were unlucky enough to live under communism. As an economic system, communism may have been helpless against capitalism, its historic adversary. But throughout the postwar years, it was the world's leading manufacturer of intellectual dissidents. I was especially fond of the cynical, pungently ironic Eastern Europeans. In the books of Milan Kundera, Janos Kis, and others, communism appeared as a limping archaism, for all that it claimed to be a heroic future. When the Eastern bloc disintegrated, I felt deprived as a reader, having no more stories of impending decline to look forward to.

I sensed this loss most acutely five years ago in a bookstore in Prague. The place was packed with Americans who imagined they were recreating the Paris of the twenties when, in fact, they were creating the Prague of the nineties. *That* Prague belonged not to Franz Kafka, whose house had been transformed into a theme park, but to K-Mart, a frenzied emporium where plenty of Czechs were to be found. The natives were building a better, happier future for themselves, but to my eyes it could not have seemed more familiar. Kundera, from his Parisian exile, seemed to be languishing, too; his post-communist novels, like those of his dissident peers, had laid bare his dependence on the muse of Stalinism for inspiration.

"One had to be a bit of a Communist to appreciate the anti-Communist literature . . . produced in cold war Eastern Europe," writes J. Hoberman in *The Red Atlantis*. Hoberman exaggerates, but not by much. Communism and the dissidence it spawned were deeply intertwined. Communists and dissidents (often former communists themselves) spoke to each other in elusive, and often untranslatable, dia-

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lectics. What perished with the fall of the Berlin Wall was not only a coercive social order but a weirdly consensual culture.

In J Hoberman, the ruins of communist culture have found a passionate and erudite archeologist. A collection of essays (most of them previously published) on communist art, film, and literature, *The Red Atlantis* is an elegy for the "Communist utopia which, in fact, never existed." Best known as a film critic for the *Village Voice*, Hoberman has also distinguished himself as an authority on Eastern European cinema. A child of New York's film underground of the early seventies, Hoberman has remained a hardboiled outsider among film critics, many of whom have allowed themselves to become obsequious publicists for the industry. He doesn't relish being a cultural power-broker; he couches his praise in language opaque enough to negate its value as ad-copy. His own tastes run to campy genre pictures and avant-garde experimentalism—the styles, it so happens, that defined communist cinema.

The Red Atlantis is unusual for being neither an indictment of art under totalitarianism nor a New Left attempt to rescue Old Leftists from the "condescension of posterity." Although the politics of the cold war figures prominently in its pages, the book is refreshingly devoid of cold war polemics. Hoberman spreads his sympathies to communists and dissidents alike, to American Popular Frontists and Czechoslovakian students, to Ben Shahn and Isaac Babel. Considering the walls that once divided such men and women, it can be jarring to find them honored by the same author. Yet from Hoberman's distinctly post-cold war perspective, they do have something in common: they are all beautiful losers, internal exiles in their native lands.

Hoberman is drawn to the history of communism not because he finds it romantic, but because he finds it fascinatingly surreal and warped, rather like the films he most admires. Indeed, the language of film criticism is as pervasive in Hoberman's treatment of recent history as the language of political criticism is absent, with sometimes troubling results. "The perfected Stalinist trial was actually staged after World War II in Czechoslovakia—despite an extensive rewrite even while the show was in preproduction," he writes of Rudolf Slansky's trial. By likening Slansky's destruction to the making of a film, Hoberman comes close to making light of it, to banalizing its horror. But I suspect he's making a larger point, which is that the show trials were all the more terrifying for being staged, for being elaborately choreographed forms of character assassination as well as, often enough, preludes to actual assassination. The trials "aestheticized politics," something Walter Benjamin believed only fascists were capable of.

According to Hoberman, "Communism itself was an aesthetic project—perhaps the aesthetic project of the century." I would have thought that honor would go to capitalist advertising, but the point is well taken. Just as advertising has inundated capitalist citizens with reflections of their ideal, consuming selves, so communist painting, film, and literature surrounded communist citizens with images of their ideal, sacrificing selves. (The Soviet artist Ilya Kabokov once explained the difference: "[O]ur advertisements, summons, explanations, instructions—and everyone knows this—do not correspond to anything, ever, anywhere in reality.") The most notorious example of communist aesthetics is, of course, Socialist Realism, with its unforgettable yet strangely impersonal images of heroic workers and peasants—Russian, Chinese, Polish, African, Cuban.

ALMOST SINCE its inception in the late twenties, Socialist Realism has attracted the ridicule of intellectuals in the West. Writing in 1939 when Socialist Realism was at its height, Clement Greenberg, soon to emerge as the high priest of postwar modernism, dismissed it as "another of the inexpensive ways in which totalitarian regimes seek to ingratiate themselves with their subjects." Greenberg disliked Socialist Realism because he considered it kitsch: a grotesque, reactionary form of pandering to the masses that stood opposed to the exalted goals of modern art.

Hoberman, however, cautions against taking Socialist Realism's hostility to modernism at face value. The movement was, he argues,

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"the guilty secret, the evil twin, the secret sharer of the very enterprise it proposed to liquidate." Drawing on Boris Groys's remarkable study *The Total Art of Stalinism*, Hoberman claims that the true horror of Socialist Realism is not that it crushed the Russian constructivist avant-garde, but that it realized the avant-garde's own vision, albeit in the service of Stalinism. "Socialist Realism," writes Hoberman, "consummated the vanguard project to transcend the museum and fuse art with life. It was Socialist Realism that bridged the gap between elite culture and the masses." Socialist Realism was, he says, "a modernism come to power, a modernism mighty enough to project a new mass consciousness beyond truth or falsehood."

In a striking formulation, Hoberman describes the look of Socialist Realism as "nostalgic for the future." The same phrase could be extended to communist ideology itself. (Eastern Europeans used to joke that the only thing one could be certain about under communism was the future.) It was this nostalgia for a perpetually receding future that made Bolshevism seem absurd to some observers from the early days of the Russian Revolution. In *The Prophet Unarmed*, the second volume of his magisterial biography of Leon Trotsky, Isaac Deutscher reports an exchange that took place at a congress of Soviets in December, 1921. Lenin gave a speech declaring that Russia's workers were not true proletarians in the Marxist sense, but "malingerers that have gone to the factories." Shlyapnikov, the leader of the soon-to-be-banned Workers Opposition, replied, "Permit me to congratulate you on being the vanguard of a non-existing class." Cleverly vandalizing the language of the state, Shlyapnikov's retort richly anticipates the idiom of dissident literature.

As Hoberman recognizes, the line between official and dissident culture in Eastern Europe was often blurred. Even more mysterious was the line between accepted and "counter-revolutionary" criticism, especially since it hinged on Moscow's ever shifting mood. Hoberman evokes these vertiginous ambiguities in a wry chapter on the "realist socialism" of Hungarian filmmakers who were subsidized, and often suppressed, by the Kádárist state. In the late sixties and seventies, the experimental collective Bela Balasz Studio (BBS), named after the seminal Hungarian film theorist, produced documentaries that courageously exposed the contradictions of "goulash" communism, while remaining within the bounds of "responsible" criticism. (There were similar efforts in Poland, where Krzysztof Kieslowski, best known in the West for his chic spiritual dramas, got his start as a documentarist.) In 1972, Gyula Estélyi, a Party secretary, extended to Gyula Gazdag and Judit Ember of the BBS an extraordinary invitation to film the Party's forthcoming purge of an agricultural cooperative leader. But while the camera was running, the leader's peasant supporters rose up to defend him, and the Party was forced to reverse its decision, making the documentary, *The Resolution*, a scathing record of the Party's corrupt machinations and its defeat. After screening the film twice, Estelyi was fired, while the film was banned for the remainder of the decade.

It seems incredible today that the Party—a "totalitarian" organization, no less—would have sponsored such a film. Hoberman suggests that the Party's encouragement was consistent with a policy of "socialist 'repressive desublimation,' extending artistic liberty the better to intensify political domination." Films like *The Resolution* were also useful to regimes seeking to project a tolerant image in the West. But it is also possible that Estelyi was among those communist functionaries who, guided by hopes no less sincere than those of their capitalist adversaries, believed they could repair the system through cautious reform and self-criticism. For those true believers, a permanent chasm existed between the socialist freedom of which they dreamed and their responsibilities to the bureaucracies they staffed—between freedom and authority, between power and the dream. In such hearts, the dream of socialism with a human face still flickered, though it turned out to be a delusion.

No group experienced the dream and delusion of communism more intensely, or more tragically, than the Jews. In the early years of the Russian Revo-

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lution, Bolshevism's opposition to anti-Semitism recommended it to many Jews, some of whom revered Lenin as a latter-day Napoleon; until the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1939, the party's antifascism earned it moral prestige in Jewish communities throughout the world. And, as Hoberman might be inclined to put it, Jews assumed some of the starring roles in the history of communism: as heroes and martyrs, as traitors and victims. The heart of *The Red Atlantis* is Hoberman's tender exploration of the Jews' long romance with communism—and of communism's lesser-known, and shorter-lived, infatuation with the Jews.

The Soviets courted the Jews through the 1920s, as part of their policy of self-determination for national minorities. Indeed, in 1926 they began settling Jews in the "national homeland" of Birobizhan, an area the size of Switzerland on the border with China. In the cities, meanwhile, Yiddish culture was vigorously promoted, and the "non-Yiddish-speaking Jew [encouraged] to . . . revolutionize the not-then-existing Yiddish theater." In 1921, the director Alexander Granovsky founded the world's first government-subsidized Yiddish theater, teaming up four years later with the brilliant actor Solomon Mikhoels, the painter Natan Altman, and Isaac Babel to produce the film *Jewish Luck*, adapted from Sholom Aleichem's stories about shtetl life. Like their contemporaries in the Harlem Renaissance, the Soviet Yiddishists were seeking at once to recover and to transcend the folkways of their people. In Hoberman's words, Soviet Yiddish culture "turned the idiom of the shtetl against the shtetl."

The Yiddish renaissance—and later Yiddish itself—came to an end, however, as official philo-Semitism gave way to spasms of semi-official anti-Semitism, disguised first as anti-Trotskyism, then as anticosmopolitanism, and finally as anti-Zionism. After a twenty-minute trial, Babel was executed in 1940 on false charges of being a Trotskyist spy. Eight years later, Mikhoels became the first of scores of Jewish writers murdered on Stalin's orders, at the dawn of a wider campaign against Jewish "cosmopolitanism" that haunted Eastern Europe through the fifties. The ironies of Jewish persecution in Eastern Europe were many and morbid. No one was more eager than Jewish communists to shed themselves of ethnic particularisms for the sake of creating a new, socialist man. Their suspicious comrades, however, refused to forget that they were Jews. Just a few years after the defeat of Hitler, amid a grotesque campaign against the restitution of Jewish property stolen by the Nazis, the officially "anti-fascist" German Democratic Republic began to stamp "Jew" on the identity cards of its Jewish citizens.

Not surprisingly, it was a Jew, a German-speaking resident of Prague, who became Eastern Europe's most controversial writer. That Franz Kafka had been dead for over twenty years made him no less of a menace to Eastern Europe's new rulers. The attacks on Kafka's writings well illustrated communism's troubles with skeptics, especially the rootless and cosmopolitan. An assimilated man with a strong attraction to Jewish theology, Kafka dared to question the promise of secular modernity, and to laugh at those who claimed to represent it. For these indiscretions the long-deceased writer was, as Hoberman nicely puts it, "magically resurrected as a dissident" by the Stalinist regimes of Eastern Europe, which were mainly in power by virtue of the Soviet army, and which quivered at any threat to their legitimacy.

A week after the end of World War II, an anti-Kafka campaign was launched throughout the communist press. An article in the French communist weekly, *Action*, asked, "Should Kafka Be Burned?"—an astonishing title, considering that all of Kafka's descendants had recently gone to their deaths in the camps. In 1950, Howard Fast placed Kafka "very near the top of what I have, in the past, rather indelicately called 'the cultural dung heap of reaction.'" Shortly after the Prague Spring, one Czech hardliner suggested that "if we are to discuss the influence of Zionism on the events . . . in 1968 . . . then we must make a detailed analysis of 'Kafkaism' and of the 'alienation' connected with it." The suppression of Kafka was a perverse measure of how much the communist authorities cared about literature, and of how much they respected the literary abilities of smart Jews.

Hoberman writes perceptively of Kafka's Eastern European heirs, who were brought to

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the attention of the English-speaking world in the early eighties by Penguin's "Writers from the Other Europe" series, edited by Philip Roth, who was himself heavily indebted to the Prague master. Unlike Aleksandr Solzhenitzyn, writers like Milan Kundera, Danilo Kiš, Ivan Klima and Tadeusz Konwicki had been men of the left. They found champions in left-liberal critics like Irving Howe, who compared their work to the political novels of André Malraux and Ignazio Silone. At the same time, as Hoberman observes, these Eastern Europeans enjoyed a different relationship to the establishment than their anticommunist admirers in the United States, having "opted out of, rather than into, the local power structures." If anyone in the States was in a position to appreciate Kafka and his heirs, it was, paradoxically, the American communists allied with the Eastern European censors, particularly those Jewish communists who were devoured by the combined forces of political and religious intolerance during the Red Scare.

In his final chapter, Hoberman audaciously retells the story of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg as a nightmare out of Kafka, in a chapter swarming with allusions to *The Trial* and "The Metamorphosis." He begins, "Someone must have denounced Julius Rosenberg," and later finds Rosenberg "transformed in his prison bed into a gigantic, red-haired insect named Rudolf Slansky."

The reference to Slansky is telling: Hoberman obviously sees the Rosenbergs as victims of a show trial tinged with anti-Semitism. But unlike other defenders of the Rosenbergs, Hoberman doesn't exculpate them of involvement in espionage. "The Rosenbergs," he writes, "were framed for an activity that all available circumstantial and psychological evidence suggests that they or rather, Julius, supported as ever by Ethel, committed. Deny that, and you deny their martyrdom any meaning." That meaning, Hoberman suggests, lies in their refusal to name names, and in the purity with which they pursued their cause. "They kept the faith. They sacrificed everything—even their children. In a time when turning state's witness was touted as the greatest of civic virtues, the Rosenbergs went to their deaths without implicating a soul. We're not talking traitors—we're talking

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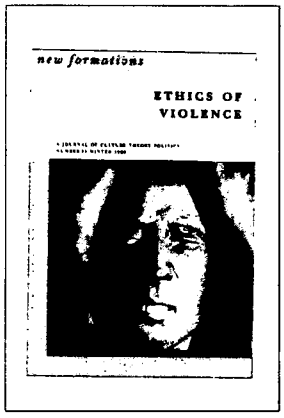

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Stalinist saints!"

Stalinist saints. I'm not sure what that means, but Hoberman has offered the most compelling defense I have read of the couple's heroism. Still, I was disappointed that Hoberman missed the two most peculiar ironies of his Slansky comparison. Had the Rosenbergs ever been asked their views on the Slansky trial, they might have condoned it as the Party's form of revolutionary justice. But had they lived in Eastern Europe, this "progressive petit-bourgeois Jewish couple" might well have shared Slansky's fate, suspected and condemned of a different kind of double loyalty. They might even have gone to their deaths as anti-Stalinist saints. ●

ADAM SHATZ is a New York writer.

David S. Sampliner

Progressivism's Forgotten Roots

ATLANTIC CROSSINGS:
SOCIAL POLITICS IN A PROGRESSIVE AGE
by Daniel Rodgers
Harvard University Press, 1998 508 pp $35

IT IS one of the oldest and most cherished of American conceits that the United States of America possesses a unique and privileged position among nations. From the Puritan John Winthrop's vision of a "city on a hill" to Ronald Reagan's invocation of Winthrop at the 1984 Republican National Convention, extolling the "shining city on a hill," Americans have long considered the American way to be both singular and exemplary.

Recent events have lent new credibility to this old boast. In the international power vacuum created by the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the United States has assumed the mantle of sole superpower, police force, and economic guru for the "new world order." And with the collapse of communist governments and the erosion of support for social democracy across the globe, it is hard to dispute the force of the newly invigorated American faith in free government and free markets. The snipping of the American social safety net has been heard round the world; Clinton-styled centrists across Western Europe have put an end to welfare as it had been known. The American example, for better or worse, reigns supreme.

Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age, Daniel Rodgers's monumental new account of progressive politics in the United States and Europe from 1870 to 1940, could not be more timely. A spirited challenge to conventional interpretations of American progressive politics, Rodgers's book evokes a forgotten period when big government was respected, and when America borrowed blueprints for building activist governments from Europe.

Therein lies Rodgers's central challenge to prevailing interpretations of American progressive politics: his argument that reform was a European import, not a wholly indigenous creation. The book's interpretive innovation is the result of an ambitious methodological departure. Rather than limiting his scope to American-born progressives, Rodgers opens up his study to include the vast network of cosmopolitan intellectuals responsible for the formation of progressive policies in Germany, England, France, Australia, and Sweden. To understand American progressivism, Rodgers boldly insists, one must comprehend the transatlantic world of ideas and political experimentation that helped shape it.

By making progressive intellectuals its focus, *Atlantic Crossings* embraces a highly unfashionable group. Conservatives, who reject progressives' belief in activist government, see them as failed, misguided visionaries, while many on the left revile them for their desire to emend rather than upend American capi-

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talism. Meanwhile, professional historians, committed to understanding history from the point of view of the downtrodden, have deliberately ignored intellectual "elites" as significant shapers of the political process. Against these political and academic currents, Rodgers asserts the importance of ideas to politics and the significance of progressive thought as a discourse of dissent from the dogma of laissez-faire capitalism.

Until 1870, reformers in the United States and Europe viewed reform as a means of restraining the power of the state. After 1870, Rodgers explains, reformers shifted their efforts from politics to the economy, seeking to unleash state power to curb the unbridled individualism of the free market and mitigate its worst evils. These reformers, policy intellectuals often lacking firm institutional attachments to either the university or the state, were the "cosmopolitan progressives" who brokered "the Atlantic era in social politics."

Resistance to laissez-faire capitalism mounted first in Germany and England, where an industrial economy evolved earliest and hence where its severest effects were first felt. In the late nineteenth century, Americans lagged behind the reform curve; as Rodgers observes, "politically and socially the United States exhibited a case of arrested national development."

Transatlantic traffic in progressive ideas thus predominantly moved, Rodgers tells us, in one direction. Starting in the 1870s, American scholars began traveling to European universities, particularly German ones, to study economics and other social sciences. Theirs was an education as much practical as theoretical. They became acquainted with progressive ideas in the classroom while witnessing the implementation of progressive policies in the streets. They studied the texts of Adolph Wagner and Gustav Schmoller, but they were equally diligent students of German factory legislation, the "municipalization" of German transit lines and utilities, and Weimar modernist housing designs.

Several other important conduits for progressive ideas helped to bring European and American intellectuals into "a common frame" of cosmopolitan discourse, what Rodgers calls "the Atlantic progressive connection." Scholars traded ideas through international conferences and journals of progressive opinion; the U.S. Bureau of Labor sponsored comparative investigations of European labor conditions and social policies. Activists in the social gospel movement, the related settlement house movement, and acolytes of Fabian socialism all visited Europe, where progressive policies had already received the test of practice. In matters ranging from city planning to social insurance to public housing, European locales served, in the words of one American reformer, as an "experiment-station for us all."

THERE WERE both advantages and disadvantages to the United States's "laggard" position with respect to European progressive reform. It allowed American progressives to shop in ports throughout Europe for ready-made, reality-tested social policies. On the other hand, the relative immaturity of social democratic institutions combined with the relative maturity of political democracy to hamper the realization of progressive policies advancing collectivist ideals. "Democracy in form," states Rodgers succinctly, "inhibited democracy of services." A decentralized state encouraged the free play of commercial interests, placing European progressive ideas into the unstable solution of American interest-group politics, where those ideas were diluted when not dissolved altogether.

Part of the dynamism of Rodgers's story derives from his keen sensitivity to its ironies. For example, American progressives derived models for social insurance programs like workers' pensions and unemployment benefits from Bismarck-era policies aimed at warding off rather than nurturing socialism. "Social insurance, the crowning achievement of Bismarck's antisocialist project of the 1880s," Rodgers wryly notes, ". . . was reframed in America as a socialist demand."

Conversely, European policies advancing collectivist values, once transplanted in America, often served commercial interests. Rodgers here avoids dogmatic assertions about the continuity between European and American progressive worlds, revealing instead the subtleties of transatlantic exchange. As he

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shrewdly observes, the very malleability that made European social policies transportable rendered them vulnerable to corporate hands eager to bend cooperative designs toward the ends of private profit. If American progressive ideas derived from European sources, progressive policies themselves assumed a uniquely American cast in their passage from European to American contexts.

The case of zoning laws provides one such example. In Europe "a device invented to curb property's speculative advantages," zoning legislation "flourished in the United States as a realtor's asset." In a land of monopoly capitalism, collective measures often became nearly indistinguishable from commercial enterprises. Once on American shores, that is, progressive policies behaved more like Social Darwinism than social democracy.

Rodgers supports his case for the influence of a "transatlantic progressive connection" with a wealth of evidence that only a historian's historian could have had the patience to collect, and that perhaps only professional historians will have the patience to read all the way through. Indeed, the book's scholarly virtues are, at times, vices for the generally educated reader. A dizzying array of American and European reformers fills its pages, yet few emerge as distinct personages. As a result, the book is sort of like a Chuck Close portrait gone awry. Rodgers's pointillist narrative technique often traps the reader in expertly rendered dots of detail, preventing the reader from stepping back to get a sense of the whole of his argument.

The book's thesis itself is a thing of considerable dexterity, a rare combination of clarity and complexity. Rodgers's main quarry is the stubborn bogey of American historians, particularly of the American left: the ideology of "American exceptionalism." The idea that American society is fundamentally different from Europe's, blessed with exceptional reserves of freedom and prosperity, and therefore governed by fundamentally different assumptions, has, Rodgers believes, obscured the continuities of economic conditions and political ideology between the States and the Continent.

One can read *Atlantic Crossings*, in short, as Rodgers's 508-page wrestling match with the ghost of Louis Hartz. In his deliberately crude and still-provocative *The Liberal Tradition in America*, Hartz, a Harvard historian, argued that material abundance and the absence of entrenched feudal structures and hoary aristocratic customs in America made all Americans proponents of a basic ideology of antistatist politics and free-market economics—made them intractable, Lockean liberals. It was this Lockean liberal consensus that doomed any and all attempts to socialize the American state.

Although Rodgers never mentions Hartz, either in the text or in the footnotes, his book clearly represents an attempt to correct Hartz's excesses and to reveal sources of optimism for the progressive project in America where Hartz saw only gloom. In contrast to Hartz, Rodgers blames contingent social circumstances, not entrenched ideological leanings, for the failure of progressive politics in America. In fact, as Rodgers shows in the case of social insurance debates, similar ideological positions, both for and against progressive reforms, existed on both sides of the Atlantic. If America radically altered or rejected European progressive policies, it was not because of a fundamental ideological difference but because of contingent social and political arrangements that made progressive ideas, entertained by both Europeans and Americans, more congenial to the European than to the American context.

Timing, Rodgers argues, was everything. World War I stirred up irrational sentiment against progressive policies with the taint of foreign (particularly German) provenance. Before and after the Great War, racial and ethnic divisions, sharpened by massive immigration from East Europe and Southern Italy, prevented the formation of powerful lobbies supporting collectivist policies. At the conclusion of Rodgers's story, World War II would create substantial disparity between American prosperity and European poverty, diminishing the force of the connections that American progressives, for nearly seventy years, tried to forge in American minds between the economic predicaments in Europe and America.

Rodgers has, in essence, not disposed of "American exceptionalism" but substituted a less deterministic version of the Hartzian po-

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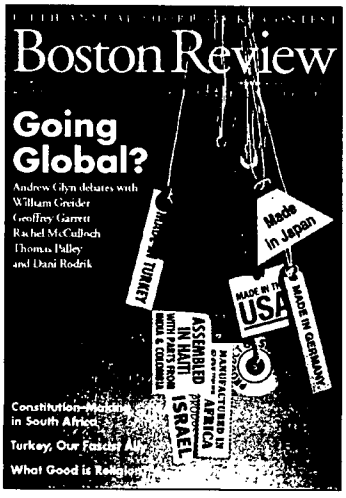
sition. He does not quarrel with Hartz's reading of the results of progressive reform but with his interpretation of the reasons for its failure. They agree that the United States has proved inhospitable to social democracy. But by attributing failure to mutable social and political alignments rather than immutable ideological proclivities, Rodgers argues that this outcome was not predetermined.

Still, having watched each effort to transplant European progressive policies on American soil wither and ultimately succumb to powerful commercial interests, the reader begins to wonder whether Rodgers, in his eagerness to overturn Hartzian exceptionalism, has overstated the viability of his "Atlantic progressive connection." Importation of European ideas into the American context occurs, almost simultaneously, with their co-optation by capitalist forces. At almost every turn, the "Atlantic progressive connection" fails to produce social democracy in America. Sometimes Rodgers blames the "legislative endgame" for the distortion of progressive policies; at other times, as in the case of David Lubin's cooperative credit associations for farmers, American intellectuals themselves are responsible for steering progressive reforms down more Lockean channels. From Rodgers's account, one is left to conclude that American progressive intellectuals were part of an American liberal consensus, as Hartz suggested, or, if not, were too powerless to disrupt it. If the former is true, Rodgers has not escaped Hartzian exceptionalism; if the latter, then his escape seems to have little practical consequence.

The grounds for optimism Rodgers does uncover lie in the sheer variety of political ideas progressives in Europe and America produced. Rodgers's massive accumulation of detail, while somewhat of an encumbrance to the general reader, is, in this respect, central to his argument: against today's impoverished social imagination Rodgers reveals the early twentieth century to have been an embarrassment of riches. Given our own era's unprecedented lack of confidence in statist solutions to social problems, Rodgers's tale reopens a vast storehouse of collectivist strategies for protecting the social order from capitalism's most damaging blows. It also provides an important corrective to that age-old narcissism, now once again inflamed, that insists on the uniqueness and superiority of the American capitalist vision. As today's Atlantic crossings go largely in the other direction, Rodgers forces us to ask whether the ideological freight we are exporting measures up to the goods we, but a century ago, once received.

DAVID S. SAMPLINER is a Ph.D. candidate in U.S. history at New York University.



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False Concepts

Editors:

In the twenty-five years since the appearance of my first book, *False Promises*, my work has occasionally been subjected to fierce criticism and to close scrutiny. Nevertheless, I have made it a practice not to reply to criticism unless invited to respond to collective reviews. Nelson Lichtenstein's review of my latest, *From the Ashes of the Old: American Labor and America's Future,* is an exception (*Dissent*, Winter 1999). I reply because this review is a serious misreading.

Lichtenstein finds that my viewpoint on organized labor's postwar trajectory is both pro-Reuther and pro-Shanker and that I favor a new social contract, like labor's deal with capital and the liberal state in the 1950s. On the basis of these remarkable, unsubstantiated assertions, the author places himself on my left.

I wish to note that in the same issue of the magazine, I have a piece in a symposium on union democracy, substantively drawn from the last chapter of the book, in which, among other points, I repudiate the Shankerite conception of union governance and call it "anti-Stalinist democratic centralism." In the book, I note, approvingly, Reuther's early call for corporations to "open the books" during contract negotiations, but argue that his leadership and policies of industrial labor in the 1950s set the stage for union decline. I show that he was an innovator in some union demands but also a collaborator with giant corporations in the auto industry, albeit to the benefit of some UAW members, that his anticommunism led to undemocratic practices, and that, under Reuther, labor's subordination to the Democratic Party has, in historical retrospect, proven disastrous to labor's cause. It's a subtle argument, to be sure, but the points are made clearly. I say that AFL-CIO President John Sweeney's call for a new social contract would be possible only on condition that labor find the means to strengthen its hand. Nowhere do I endorse such a policy.

I find reason to praise Shanker for his ability to become a public intellectual at a time when most labor leaders had become contract administrators and bean counters, but I do not support his views on some educational matters or his style of unionism.

In short, Lichtenstein's caricature of my position leads him to miss most of my essential points. Perhaps the difficulty lies in the fact that I have tried to avoid the dogmatism that marks some leftist critiques of union labor's leadership by conceding some of its accomplishments. What is surprising is that the author of a largely apologetic biography of Reuther should now adopt the perspective of the dogmatists.

STANLEY ARONOWITZ
New York, N.Y.

Editors:

Having worked at AFSCME, the United Mine Workers, and as a consultant to several other unions, I can't help but respond to Nelson Lichtenstein's and Stanley Aronowitz's gratuitous slaps at the American Federation of Teachers.

Far from being a neoconservative juggernaut, I've always found AFT members and staff to be among the most committed and innovative unionists I've ever worked with. What Lichtenstein and Aronowitz characterize as the AFT's tilt to the right is, in fact, a refreshing, liberal pragmatism. It's a unionism unencumbered by the nostalgia, romanticism and rhetoric that some on the left have too often mistaken for strategy.

Rather than being a hindrance to the AFT's progress, I'm convinced the union's pragmatism, part of Al Shanker's legacy, is one reason the AFT has not only doubled in size since the late seventies, but also redefined the debate on public education in America. Correct me if I'm wrong, but the last time I checked, that's what a strong labor movement is all about.

JIM GROSSFELD
Washington, D.C.

Nelson Lichtenstein replies

In his *From the Ashes of the Old*, Stanley Aronowitz mines recent labor history for the strategic insights it offers contemporary partisans of a revived union movement. But if he gets the history wrong the contemporary lessons will be misguided as well. That's why I took exception to

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his frequent, and sometimes offhand, invocations of the idea of a "social compact" that guided the relations between labor and capital during an earlier era of labor strength and progress. My critique here is not so much that Aronowitz advocates such a compact, but that he accepts the reality of its historical existence. "Workers as well as employers had acknowledged the compact," he writes on page 5. But whatever the contemporary views of John Sweeney and Robert Reich, many historians, including Elizabeth Fones-Wolf, David Stebenne, Sanford Jacoby, Jack Metzgar, and myself have argued that even in the 1950s, industrial relations instability and corporate anti-unionism were so great that the term "social compact" is fundamentally misleading, and for contemporary activists, disarming.

I was also surprised that Aronowitz gave such a retrospective political pass to Walter Reuther and Albert Shanker. Regardless of their organizational accomplishments or their collective-bargaining prowess, these two figures are ideologically polarizing, and for good reason. They were neither fools nor conservatives, so when they drew a line between their unions and the new social movements that had erupted in the 1960s, the division was hard-edged and long lasting. In Reuther's case, Aronowitz just gets the basic facts wrong about the UAW president's disastrous decision to hang in there with LBJ during the spring of 1968, a decisive moment, not only in the history of the Vietnam War, but in the relationship between labor and all those social forces to its left. Reuther was not "his own person" as Aronowitz avers on page 210 of his book, but collaborated with Presidents Kennedy and Johnson in the most self-deluding fashion. Chapter and verse on such episodes can be found in my "largely apologetic" biography of the UAW leader.

Jim Grossfeld praises Albert Shanker's "pragmatism," which helped double AFT membership, but Shanker and his circle turned a teachers' movement into an autocratic business union that policed organized labor's ideological boundary. Likewise, Aronowitz offers us an Albert Shanker in which his disastrous relationship with the African-American community and his hostility to the main body of post-1968 liberalism are alluded to in only the most gingerly fashion. If his critique is more sharply posed in a subsequent *Dissent* essay, I'm delighted. But no such attack on "anti-Stalinist democratic centralism" appears in *From the Ashes of the Old*.

To Letter Writers

- *We welcome succinct letters from our readers. But because we have a long "lead time" for each issue, you have to send us your letter within three weeks after getting an issue of* Dissent *in order to get it into the next issue.*

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Unprotected Speech?

Editors:

First-Amendment loyalists like Wendy Kaminer ("Feminists, Racketeers, and the First Amendment," Winter 1999) make valid points about the need for citizens to protect the constitutional right to protest in this society. Regrettably, though, they often tend to downplay present dangers in favor of concerns about plausible but by no means inevitable future ills.

The point is that "imminent lawless action" caused by speech or protest is not a vague concept, in a context where violence against a target group is systematically present, as it has been for over ten years in the anti-abortion movement. The murder of seven doctors is qualitatively different from the disturbing situation of boycott breakers being vandalized or being "publicly identified and vilified" on a one-time basis in the case involving an NAACP boycott that Kaminer sets up as a parallel to NOW's RICO suit.

If it can be shown that there is a historic pattern of deadly violence against a particular group of persons, on the basis of a legally protected status or activity, then calls to violence and protest strategies involving the threat of violence against that group ought, de facto, *to cease to be protected speech.*

I agree with Kaminer that RICO is not the ideal instrument for the task of protecting the targets of ideological violence. That is why we need well-defined hate-speech and hate-crimes laws in this country. But for this to happen, the guardians of freedom of speech need to participate. We must acknowledge Oliver Wendell Holmes's truism that "you do not have the right to shout 'fire!' in a crowded theater" applies where "fire!" is the call to violence, and this country's theater is sadly crowded with the targets of racist, homophobic and "pro-life" violence.

Christy Rodgers
San Francisco, Calif.

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Wendy Kaminer replies

Actually, Oliver Wendell Holmes suggested that you do not have the right to shout "fire" *falsely* in a crowded theater. Statements accusing abortion providers of murder or homosexuals of sins against God are not false: they're not lies, they're opinions, which, in a free society, people must have the right to express. Holmes's famous remark is not relevant to political protests.

Calls for violence may or may not be protected, depending on the circumstances and the intent of the speaker. The First Amendment generally requires a very close causal connection between violent speech and violent action, partly to prevent the suppression of political opinions, however extreme. Of course, the murder of seven abortion doctors is different from the intimidation of boycott breakers, but the defendants in *NOW v. Scheidler* were not charged with encouraging or facilitating murder. If they raided abortion clinics and assaulted clinic workers, they can be prosecuted for their actions, but how can we hold them responsible for the acts of others? Should every antiwar protester who took over a college administration building in the 1960s or simply shouted slogans condemning those who supported the war have been held responsible for the bombings or bank robberies by radicals on the violent fringe of their movements? It is simply not a crime to share the aims of people who turn to violence; it is not even a crime to applaud them.This doesn't mean that abortion providers have no legal recourse against people who threaten their lives. Consider the recent jury verdict holding anti-abortion activists liable for contributing to the "Nuremberg Files" Web site and issuing wanted posters featuring abortion providers. This was a very close case, distinguished by the fact that individual doctors were identified and clearly targeted. It was more like a case of stalking than an instance of protected political protest, or hate speech. Some guardians of free speech find this verdict defensible, but it involved direct, targeted threats. The First Amendment demands no less.

ERRATA

We apologize to Marc Edelman for misspelling his name on the cover of the Fall 1998 issue. We also regret the typo on p. 97 of the Winter 1999 issue. In Morris Dickstein's discussion of Bonnard, the thirteenth line from the bottom of column two should read, "we see small daubs of color." -Eds.

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Bob Chase, the president of the National Education Association, recently declared that its members should "move beyond ideology" and "Politics must stop at the school door." As I daily try to weave my way through the politics of schooling in order to focus on children, faculty, and families, I find it hard to be unsympathetic to this sentiment. But the truth is that public education needs more, not less, "ideology."

When "ideology" is missing what we often have is an ideology in disguise, masked as "common sense." Is the growing support for vouchers and privatization a sign that we have taken politics out of education? Is the increasing use of state legislation to decide how to teach nonideological? Is the fact that mayors are now directly involved in running city school systems a sign that politics has stopped at the school door? No: these are symptoms of an ideological attack on our public institutions.

Instead of "ideas," we now have tests—the tougher the better. So long as tests rank children precisely, they appear to be scientific. The new panacea—"standards-driven reforms"—views the imposition of high-stakes state and national tests as a way to drive (that is, control and monitor) performance by people whom society has decided to distrust—the children, their teachers and their families, especially those in our "inner cities." It's a proposition filled with ideas, begging for counter ideas.

The standards-driven reformers proclaim "high standards" that are fundamentally anti-intellectual. Important concepts become items to be stuffed in and regurgitated out. Such practices will give us students prepared to give three reasons for World War I, but none who might wonder if it could have been avoided; students prepared to explain evolution or the motion of the planets, but who in their heart believe that the Bible and astrology provide better explanations than paleontology or astronomy. We'll produce students who can pick the right answers to "basic math" questions but cannot see through the gross misuse of statistical data by politicians and advertisers.

We will never get closer to having good schools when our only definition of a good school is one that has higher test scores than some other schools. As long as our definition of "good enough" is comparative, we'll be avoiding the tough task of defining goodness. Yes, to ask such questions will cause political friction. But democracy is all about politics, about differences of opinion. Is there, in fact, a single definition of the well-educated adult, and *should there be*? It might just be that a democratic society shouldn't have one single definition of what constitutes being "well-educated." Maybe we should require communities to take responsibility for their own ideas and then let lots of different definitions co-exist.

In a democratic society, ideology should not become our enemy—the villain in the story. It should be one of our tools. "Ideology," defined as "a body of ideas reflecting the social needs and aspirations of an individual, group, class, or culture," is central to what schools should be about. Ideas are central to the function of democratic schooling—which involves training kids to think carefully about other people's ideas and to take responsibility for their own. Pluralism and diversity require convincing the very young that ideas do matter, that they are tools for a lively and interesting life.

Deborah Meier

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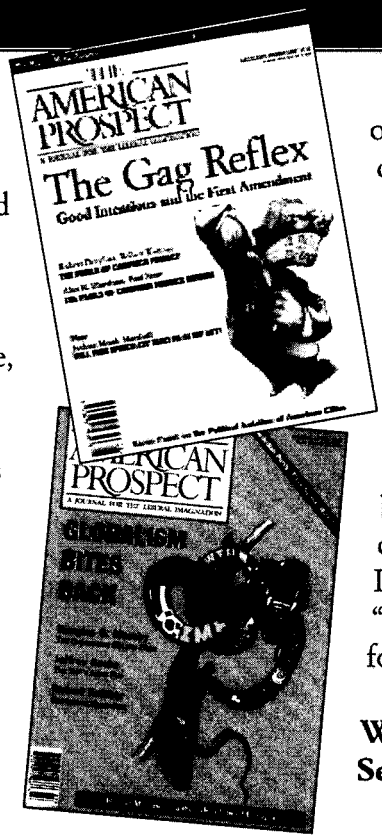

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